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GOAL SETTING EXPERIENCES AND PROGRAM SATISFACTION OF ACADEMIC UPGRADING STUDENTS

BY

LUCY JOAN RACHYNSKI

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

IN

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING, 1993

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled GOAL SETTING EXPERIENCES AND PROGRAM SATISFACTION OF ACADEMIC UPGRADING STUDENTS submitted by LUCY JOAN RACHYNSKI in partial fulfillment for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the goal setting experiences of Lakeland College Academic Upgrading (AU) students and to see how those experiences related to student satisfaction with the AU Program. Two specific research questions guided the development of the goal-related questions in a broader Program evaluation study. Those questions then guided the data analysis.

The data were gathered through a survey questionnaire. A total of 143 of 189 registered students participated in the study for a 76% response rate. Data analysis involved frequency counts for descriptive findings and chi-square statistical procedures for analysis of relationships between and among independent variables. In one open-ended question thematic analysis was used to determine underlying themes.

Data on student goal setting experience indicated that students did set educational, career, and personal goals. A quarter of students changed their goals primarily for career-related reasons suggesting that assistance from the College to ensure the goal changes were effective would be beneficial. Most students reported setting goals regularly after enrollment although they achieved their goals at a lesser rate. Few students had formal training in goal setting; such training may help increase the rate of goal achievement. Family goal discussion was the most frequent goal setting activity for students. Teachers and the college calendar were the most helpful resources in identifying, planning, and working toward student goals. However, student satisfaction with sponsors and college counselors was low.

Family goal discussion was the goal setting activity involved in most significant relationships with other goal setting variables. Training in goal setting appeared associated with more participation in other goal setting activities including goal achievement. Overall, high participation in one goal setting activity was associated with high participation in other goal setting activities.

Student satisfaction with various aspects of Lakeland's AU Program was mixed. Crosstabulation data among goal setting variables and Program component satisfaction indicated that individuals with higher frequencies of goal setting reported higher satisfaction with the Program. Appropriate entry level, overall Program satisfaction, access to financial aid staff, instructor help in resolving Program problems, and liking to make independent learning decisions were the Program component variables most involved in dependent relationships with goal setting activity variables. Program satisfaction was most associated with talking to peers about goals and with goal setting in courses. Because goal setting activities were involved in student satisfaction with important components of the Program, it is recommended that the College introduce a systematic goal setting program for students and associated College staff. It is also recommended that more research be undertaken into goal setting with AU learners and adult students in similar programs.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of Study	1
Background of Study	5
Problem Statement	5
Significance of Study	6
Limitations and Delimitations	9
Definition of Terms	10
Criteria for Literature Review	15
Organization of the Thesis	15
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	17
Nature of the Topic	17
Adult Learning and Learners	18
Basic Skills Learners	20
Reentry Women	26
Basic Skills Programs	29
Goals	32
The Concept and Process of Goal Setting	34
Goals and Adult Education	38
Summary	41
CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	43
Study Context	43
Instrumentation	45
Survey Instrument	46
Pilot Testing and Revision	53
Instrument Validity and Reliability	53
Data Collection Procedures	54
Summary	56
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS	57
Background Information	57
Goal Setting Experience	59
Student Goals	60
Summary	63

Page

Goal Setting Activities 63
Summary 66
The Relationship Between Prior Goal Setting and Student Goal Setting Experiences 67
Relationships Among Goal Setting Activities 68
Summary 72

Program Information 73
Student Satisfaction with Program Components 73
Summary 77
Relationship of Goals and Goal Setting Activities to Program Satisfaction 78
Overview of Significant Relationships 80
Relationships within Program Components 80
Goal Setting Activity Variables 84
Summary 85

CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 86
Summary of Study 86
Review of Findings 88
Conclusions 92
Recommendations 96
Concluding Comments 101

BIBLIOGRAPHY 102

APPENDIX A Student Questionnaire 115
APPENDIX B Questionnaire Administration Guidelines 126
APPENDIX C Cover Memorandum to Questionnaire Administrators 129

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
TABLE 1	Student Background Information	58
TABLE 2	Student Goal Information	60
TABLE 3	Personal and College-Supported Goal Setting Experiences	64
TABLE 4	Influence of Prior Goal Setting on Student Goal Change	67
TABLE 5	Statistical Significance of Goal Setting Activities by Each Other	68
TABLE 6	Satisfaction with Program Components	75
TABLE 7	Statistical Significance of Program Satisfaction Variables with Goal Setting Activities	79
TABLE 8	General Patterns of Significant Relationships	81

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Goal setting has become a popular approach to improving performance in a wide variety of settings (Locke, Shaw, Saarie & Latham, 1981). Locke & Latham (1984) researched goal setting for over 18 years and found that, using appropriate goal setting techniques, performance consistently improved in both laboratory and field studies. After reviewing the effect and process of effective goal setting in over 100 studies between 1969 and 1980, Locke, Sarri, Shaw, & Latham (1981) state "The beneficial effect of goal setting on task performance is one of the most robust and replicable findings in the psychological literature."

In business, research indicates goal setting leads to greater productivity and profit (Pritchard, 1987). Goal setting has also been applied, although to a lesser extent, in educational settings. This strategy has had positive effects even with particularly challenging groups like those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and behavior problems (Lockman et al., 1985; Wooster, & Hall, & Woodhouse, 1986). One educational group which has increasingly gained attention in this century is adult learners and there too the impact of goals is evident. In his classic study of adult learners, Houle (1961) developed a typology that included the goal-oriented adult learner. Another key figure in the field, Knowles (1980), suggests that assisting adult learners to achieve their goals is the purpose of educators.

There has been little focused study, however, on the goals and goal setting experiences of under-educated adults returning to formal education. Yet for such learners being able to effectively set and achieve goals could increase the likelihood of that return being successful. The literature emphasizes the importance of such a success on both a personal and societal level. Technological, global, demographic, and economic factors are accelerating societal changes on an unprecedented scale (Cross, 1981). To cope

successfully with changes caused by those forces individuals will require an adequate reading, writing, and numeracy base (Carnavele, Gainer & Villet, 1990; Learning is living, 1982; Porter, 1991; Premier's Council Report, 1990; Smith, 1984; Southam Literacy Report, 1990).

On a broader scale, society itself has a large and growing "stake" in the success of reentry learners (Rubenson, 1984). A tone of urgency is evident in literature outlining the societal changes and the need to learn new skills in response to those changes (Morrison & Rubenson, 1989; Sharpe, 1990; Thomas, 1983). In 1981 Cross wrote: "The learning society is growing because it must. It would be difficult to think of some way to live in a society changing as rapidly as ours without constantly learning new things" (p.1). Charner & Fraser (1986) summarize the link between change forces and education: "At a very basic level, learning a job, advancing on a job, keeping pace with changing technologies, and preparing for a new job are all dependent on learning. Without opportunities for continued education and training, adults will be unable to respond to the job and career changes that they will face in the future" (p. 9).

However, for any advanced skills to be developed, foundational skills must be in place. Porter (1991) warns: "Canada's workforce is not well equipped for upgrading and change. The basic skill levels of many citizens are inadequate, in spite of high per capita spending on education" (p. 67). The Learning is Living taskforce (1982) advocated the same focus on basic skills: "People need to develop a solid foundation in literacy; familiarity with numbers and scientific principles; and an analytical ability and communications skills; creating a base which permits them to adapt quickly and absorb the new, industrial skills that will be required" (p. 28).

The importance of obtaining a basic education is heightened by data that consistently report previously completed education as the most predictive factor in both continuing education and socioeconomic status (Charner & Fraser, 1986; Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Larson, 1980; Learning is Living, 1981). Given the accelerating need for

learning new, increasingly sophisticated skills, researchers warn that individuals cannot simply stop learning. Those who do not continue to learn will slide back in an increasing gap between the rich and poor (Mahaffey, 1983; Wilson, 1987). That gap is increasing because, previously, individuals who had not completed high school could work in lower skill occupations. However, technological developments and globalization are causing these positions to steadily disappear (Cross, 1981; Porter, 1991; Webb, 1970). As a result, the taskforce in Learning is Living concluded that "... in the context of issues of retraining and recurrent education, the fact that less-educated adults are less likely to participate in further training, means that attention to adult basic education will be an essential first step" (1982, p. 30).

With the need for higher levels of skill and knowledge in society it is important to assist under-educated individuals, least familiar with learning, to resume their education. Without basic skills, they will be unable to acquire the educational background and credentials increasingly required for personal employment satisfaction and for the higher skill levels needed by the Canadian economy. Since goal setting has been consistently effective in enhancing employee effectiveness and satisfaction in the workplace, that strategy should be explored for under-educated adults.

There are indications that goals are being linked to adult education. In a comprehensive study by the Alberta Vocational Center in 1980, career and personal goals were included as adult basic skills (Todd & Martin, 1987). In Alberta, the importance of goals is reinforced on a provincial level by government requirements that adults receiving sponsorship to upgrade their education identify a career goal relevant to current industry needs. In addition to career goals, the literature indicates an adult basic education (ABE) learner brings academic and personal goals to a learning situation (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Mahaffey, 1983). Career goals refer to the work situation where the learner plans to apply knowledge and skills. Academic goals are the learner's educational intentions which may range from finishing one particular course to completing a more advanced

program at a current or future institution. Personal goals involve the changes and achievements an individual hopes to implement on self development or interpersonal levels.

Educational institutions acknowledge the importance of student goals. For example, follow up studies on dropouts commonly discuss the extent to which student "goals" have been met prior to leaving a program. However, there is limited indication that institutions pay systematic attention to developing or measuring those student goals (Daniels, 1990; Flaherty & Lucas, 1989; Mahaffey, 1983; Tichenor, 1988). Educational institutions have an opportunity to go beyond passive discussion or review of student goals. Studies indicate that instructors and counselors have a significant impact on learner effectiveness (Martin, 1990; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Mezirow, Darkenwald & Knox, 1975; Prager, 1983; Winterstein, 1982). These college personnel can become critical intervening agents, assisting learners to develop and achieve their goals.

Helping students gain goal setting skills would have the short term benefits of increasing the likelihood that learners will achieve their current career, educational, and personal goals. Simultaneously, by incorporating goal setting into the educational programs and reinforcing those processes and skills, the educational institutions would support learners in developing a valuable life skill that would continue to benefit them long after they leave the institution.

In Alberta and Saskatchewan, Lakeland College has offered an Adult Upgrading (AU) program since 1975 as part of its mission "to effectively serve its constituents by providing educational services responsive to the requirements of the workplace and to the needs of the community for lifelong learning" (Lakeland College, 1988). During that time the overall purpose of Lakeland College has been to assist students to meet their goals. However, the actual degree to which this occurs has not been studied. This study explores the goal setting experience of Academic Upgrading students at the College then considers the relationship between that experience and student Program satisfaction.

Background of the Study

Lakeland College is a multicampus interprovincial post secondary institution in Northeastern Alberta serving Alberta and Saskatchewan students. The College began as the Vermilion School of Agriculture in 1913 and offered both high school and vocational courses in agriculture and home economics. Interprovincial status was granted to the College in 1975. At that time the current Academic Upgrading Program, entitled Vocational Preparation, was first offered. Initially the Program was available only at Lloydminster but by 1977 Vocational Preparation was accessible in 6 other Lakeland College centers in Alberta. In 1989 -1990 Lakeland College offered AU at 5 sites with 15 instructors. Approximately 180 full-time students participated in the Program during the September to May academic year.

The Academic Upgrading Program at Lakeland has been in existence in various forms since 1975 but since its beginning, no comprehensive evaluation had been conducted. Such a study was initiated in 1989 by the Academic Dean. Two objectives guided the evaluation:

1. to gather information for the purpose of effective decision-making with respect to the Program;
2. to facilitate a process which would focus upon the goals, objectives, and operation of the Program and foster communication and teamwork among stakeholders.

The exploration of student goal achievement was an important component of the major study. Nevertheless, the nature and scope of data analysis focusing on goals would necessarily be limited to the overall Program evaluation objectives. This study, however, provides an opportunity to analyze the goal-related data more intensively for relationships among student goal setting and student satisfaction with the Program.

Problem Statement

This study sought to explore how students felt about their learning experience as it

was impacted by goal setting. The problem statement which guided this study was: What is the relationship between goal setting experiences of Lakeland College Academic Upgrading students and their perceived Program satisfaction?

Research questions directing the study were:

1. What were the goal setting experiences of students prior to and during the Academic Upgrading Program at Lakeland College?
2. What is the relationship of student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland Academic Upgrading Program?

Significance of the Study

Several groups could benefit from this study: Lakeland College students and Lakeland College itself, and other basic skills students and program providers.

Benefits to Lakeland College students. Despite evidence that goal setting increases performance, adult education literature shows little attention to the sophisticated goal setting skills common in industry. Yet adult learners are noted for their pragmatic, goal oriented approach to education (Brookfield, 1986; Quigley & Oddgeirsson, 1984; Rossing & Long, 1981; Watt & Boss, 1987).

Educational success is particularly important for adults returning to educational settings for the first time after being unsuccessful in a previous effort to complete secondary schooling. Because of past failures, basic skills students come to a learning situation with doubts about their ability to be productive and to perform successfully in an educational setting (Almeida, 1991; Cross, 1981; Kozol, 1985; Mezirow et al., 1975; Thiel, 1985; Watt & Boss, 1987). These learners have a personal history of educational disappointment in a society where high school has become a minimum requirement rather than an option (Anderson, 1988; Prosperity Secretariat, 1991; Thomas, 1983).

Even when an adult has risked reentry, enrollment does not guarantee success. Anderson and Darkenwald (in Martin, 1990) write that these learners are four times as

likely to drop out as average adult students. Given the increasing importance of basic education skills in our society and the additional challenge of completion for these reentry adult learners, any approach that increases the likelihood of student success and satisfaction merits consideration.

Benefits to Lakeland College. Lakeland College itself could benefit in several ways by ensuring that its Academic Upgrading students are successful and satisfied with the College. As more institutions and programs compete for decreasing funding the need for evidence of student success increases (Apps, 1988; Charner & Fraser, 1986; Heydinger, 1985; Rainsford, 1990). That evidence is important for programs like Academic Upgrading and Adult Basic Education that are seldom funded out of an institution's base budget (Draper & Clark, 1980). In an effort to measure and increase their educational effectiveness, institutions have conducted numerous studies with current, former, and prospective learners to identify how programs can best meet the learner needs (Mahaffey, 1983; Seppanen, 1991; Tichenor, 1988; Vanis, 1987).

Educational researchers are reinforcing the need for institutions to look at the quality and effectiveness of their services. Studies are modifying the traditional model of learner deficiency as the key to nonparticipation or dropout. Instead an interactive model has emerged in which institutional and learner factors interact on an individual's decision to enroll in or complete a program (Darkenwald & Gavin, 1987; Garrison, 1985; Hayes & Valentine, 1989; Martin, 1990; Quigley & Odgeirrson, 1984).

Increased Program effectiveness and the corresponding student achievement and satisfaction could heighten community support for the College. This would, in turn, reinforce government funding support. In addition, research indicates that "word of mouth" could be the most significant factor in the decision to enroll in a program (Kozol, 1985; Smith, 1984). Satisfied students and graduates are positive community advocates for the Program reinforcing a positive cycle of increased student enrollment and ongoing satisfaction. If AU graduates are considering continuing their education in the future,

they would be more likely to enroll in other Lakeland College Programs if they have had a positive experience in the AU Program.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will identify factors that assist students in goal attainment and successful Program completion. The College could then reinforce those approaches which positively influence current students and, if necessary, introduce other processes or resources to help current and future students experience even more academic, career and personal success as a result of having attended Lakeland College.

Benefits to other AU learners and providers. In addition to Lakeland College learners and administration, other basic skills learners and providers may be assisted by this study to the extent that Lakeland AU students reflect the overall characteristics of AU learners. Within the diversity of basic skill learners, common fundamental and potent characteristics exist. Reentry learners share personal and environmental factors that result in an extremely tenuous return to the traditional classroom. In their study, Last Gamble on Education, Mezirow et al. (1975) capture the challenge: "[With a] limited attention span for study, a high degree of self-doubt bred of past failures, and a tendency to take easy offense, the problem is obvious" (p. 33). Rachel, Jackson & Leonard (1987) suggest the barriers facing general adult learners are exacerbated for ABE learners. In additional to internal dispositional barriers like low self esteem, ABE learners face external situational barriers ranging from lack of access to childcare to limited incomes and inappropriately scheduled classes (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Cross, 1971; Rachel et al., 1987; Watt & Boss, 1987).

Because of the common past experiences of academic failure to many reentry learners, it is critical that any new educational experience begin and continue with success. Effective goal setting is based on initially establishing realistic, attainable goals to ensure and reinforce success. Then individuals can move on to attain more challenging goals building on that accumulating feeling of achievement. This building, or rather

rebuilding, of educational success and confidence seems critical to reentry learners in general; therefore any information or data from Lakeland reentry learners should be relevant to other reentry learners.

Limitations and Delimitations

Analysis and description of this study was bounded by the following limitations and delimitations:

1. The study will include only full or part-time students attending the AU Program at Lakeland College during the 1989 - 1990 academic year when the study was conducted.

2. The study will consider only the goal setting experiences and Program satisfaction of students who were in attendance the day of survey administration; therefore, the results do not reflect a random sample. In addition a small sample size (143) is the basis of this study.

3. This study will draw upon data gathered from a larger evaluation study. Within that study the student questionnaire was only one approach to data collection but relevant questions from that questionnaire are the basis of this study.

4. Data were collected through the student questionnaire which had been developed, pilot tested and revised in conjunction with an evaluation planning committee from Lakeland College. However, the instrument was not standardized, therefore, its validity has not been determined through other studies or measurements.

5. Data were gathered in the primary evaluation project through a variety of sources which could corroborate the conclusions drawn from questionnaire data.

However, this study looks only at the questionnaire data, therefore "...the tendency of respondents to alter their responses to conform to the implicit purposes of the study, to portray themselves as better adjusted or a better citizen, parent, or student than they really are" (Smith & Glass, 1987, p. 248) is not cross-checked.

6. The intent was to obtain responses from the largest number of students based on their understanding of the term "goal." Therefore personal interpretations, rather than a specified definition of the term "goal" guide the responses and are the basis of the data and of the data analysis in this study.

Definition of Terms

Definitions have a significant impact on research results in the field because they "...to greater or lesser extents, control research findings; output is a function of input" (Shipp & McKenzie, 1981, p. 188). Therefore, key terms used throughout this study are defined in this section. The depth of discussion regarding a definition is guided by the relevance, complexity, or inconsistency with which that concept appears in the literature and by the significance of that concept to this study.

Adult

An individual who is at least 17 years of age and has been out of school for at least a year (Lakeland College, 1988).

Adult Education

In reviewing the literature, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) conclude that no "universally accepted definition of adult education" exists (p. 118). Charters (1987) captures the challenge of delineating this field when he states that the definition "...should

be broad but not vague and may indicate what is excluded as well as what is included" (p. 24). Broad definitions of adult education can be readily found (Bryson in Smith, Aker & Kidd, 1970; UNESCO, 1976) but Shipp and McKenzie (1981) warn against making adult learning "coterminous with consciousness." They, like other researchers, caution that as a result of defining terms too broadly researchers have neglected the "non-learning segment of the adult population" (Brookfield, 1986; Darkenwald and Merriam; 1982; Rubenson, 1984).

This study needed a definition of adult education that reflected the objectives and learning circumstances of the AU participants at Lakeland College. Within the array of adult education definitions a significant concept is that of changed behavior (Charters, 1987; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Houle, 1961; Knowles, 1980; Waldron & Moore, 1991). This concept reflects the objectives of Lakeland College AU participants. The other key dimensions of the Lakeland study were the organized, adult-focused nature of the learning process. Therefore for this study, adult education is defined as "...the process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or skills " (Darkenwald & Merriam,1982, p. 9).

Adult Basic Education /Academic Upgrading

The value of standardized definitions was particularly apparent in seeking literature relevant to the Lakeland Academic Upgrading (AU) learner. This search was complicated because the Lakeland AU Program covers a wide range of skill levels (from grades 5 to 12) and because studies vary in how they select and categorize populations from those grade levels. Some studies consider the lower grades as adult basic education (ABE); other studies include grades 1 to 12 as ABE; still other studies deal only with secondary education levels (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; DeCoito & MacKeracher; 1984; Draper, 1980; Mezirow et al., 1975; Project Literacy, 1986; Project Report, 1986).

Despite the questionable nature of using quantitative measures to describe learner abilities (MAEJT, 1987) grade levels were the most viable criteria for selection of literature to review. For this study Thomas' (1983) definition of ABE is appropriate, acknowledging that Lakeland's AU program begins at grade 5: "Adult Basic Education (ABE) is the generic name used to denote the provision of activities and programs for adults who have not completed elementary or secondary school education." Information that appeared to focus on the very basic ABE (or English as a Second Language) levels was excluded from the review because Lakeland College learners were more advanced.

Adult High school Equivalency/Academic Upgrading

Literature about adults returning to complete high school was more straightforward although some studies did include the full range of ESL to high school equivalency (HSE) learners (Seppanen, 1991;.Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). Seppanen does acknowledge the difficulty but importance of separating ESL and ABE learners in a study. Martin and Fisher's (1989) definition of adult secondary education (ASE) is appropriate to the goals and process of the Lakeland College AU Program: "These programs seek to enhance learners' reading, writing, computing, and thinking skills so they can obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent..." (p. 478). Other terms writers use to refer to high school completion programs are Adult High School Equivalency (AHE) and General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Goal

Students are asked to identify their goals upon applying to attend the AU Program but that information is based on individual interpretation of the term "goal." In keeping with that informal interpretation, a broad popularized definition of the term will be used within this study. Therefore, taken from the Random House College Dictionary (1975), a goal is "The result or achievement toward which effort is directed." Three types of goals

are relevant to this study:

- Career goals are associated with the work situation where the learner plans to apply knowledge and skills;
- Academic goals are the learner's educational intentions;
- Personal goals are the changes and achievements an individual hopes to implement personally or interpersonally.

Goal Setting

For this study, goal setting is defined as the personal or interpersonal processes in which an individual engages to identify, plan or work toward a desired result.

Goal Setting Experience

Goal setting experience during the Lakeland College AU Program refers to data drawn from student responses to a range of goal-related variables including:

- information related to identifying, setting, and changing educational, career, and personal goals;
- participation in specified goal setting activities (goal setting before enrolling in the AU Program; goal setting now; goal setting in courses; goal setting training; talking about goals with other students or friends, instructors, or family members; and achieving goals);
- satisfaction with College resources and services in identifying, planning, and working toward goals.

Lakeland College

An Alberta/Saskatchewan interprovincial, multi-campus educational institution providing Adult Upgrading, Vocational Preparation, and Academic Transfer Programs (Lakeland College, 1988).

Program Satisfaction

Student satisfaction with the Lakeland College AU Program is indicated by respondents selecting a variable from a 5-point Likert scale to rate their agreement with statements about Program components (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=undecided; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree).

Student Characteristics

Factors which describe and/or relate to student demographic, academic, and employment status.

Student Satisfaction

For the purposes of this study the term "satisfaction" builds on Roget's (1984) broad definition: "To grant or have what is demanded by (a need or desire)." The definition indicates the educational institution's ability to affect the satisfaction of learner needs and desires through the phrase "being granted." However, the ability of the learners to affect the degree of their own satisfaction is inadequately inferred in Roget's definition. For this study adaptations to the basic definition seek to: a) introduce an evaluative component; b) add a personal component to the meeting of those needs or desires, in keeping with the self-directed nature of goal setting and attainment; c) situate the term in the objectives of Lakeland learners; d) reflect the specific Program components for which student satisfaction will be measured.

Considering these parameters, the guiding definition of "student satisfaction" in this study is: "A measure of the degree to which students are granted, have or acquire the educational, career, and personal needs or desires they bring with them or develop during their participation in specified aspects of the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Program."

Criteria for Literature Review

Criteria for selecting literature varied for the each section. The first part of the review develops a broad picture by drawing on key summaries of adult education literature within the previous decade and by referring to major theorists in the field. Here the purpose is to establish a profile of the general adult learner for ongoing reference when discussing the AU learner. Literature specific to academic upgrading was needed for the second section. Because the Program includes ABE and ASE levels, both types of literature were consulted and included if they related to medium or higher level learners (grades 5 to 12). Relevant studies that did not specify grade levels were included if they did not deal with the very basic or ESL learner levels. The section on AU women also discusses women reentering education at higher education levels where the two groups share similar circumstances and experiences.

Literature for the third section on goals was drawn from various fields because examples of goals setting in adult education are limited. Conceptual and experimental literature was consulted then incorporated in the review if it added to the understanding of how goals do or could impact adult learners. Then goal-related evidence was gleaned from general adult education and from the emerging studies. The lack of literature on goal setting with adult learners groups reinforces the need for study and research into what has proven to be a potent motivational strategy in other areas of adult life.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter I introduced the study, problem statement, research questions, and significance of the study. It also outlined the limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and definitions associated with the research.

Chapter II covers the related literature. It discusses relevant terminology then outlines the motivations, barriers, and characteristics of general adult learners. The next section focuses on the learners at the upgrading level and on upgrading programs. The

final section of the chapter deals with goals in various settings and the implications of goal-related research for AU learners and programs.

The research methodology is presented in Chapter III. First the population, sample, and sampling procedure are introduced. Then the development and administration of the instrument are discussed. In Chapter IV the findings and analyses of the study are presented and in the final chapter findings are summarized, implications discussed and recommendations offered.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This literature study begins by establishing the broad context of current adult education through outlining participation rates, profiling typical adult learners, and discussing why adults do or do not participate. Then a particular type of learner is highlighted -- the reentry adult who has not completed a high school credential or its equivalent. The final section of the literature review introduces the concept of goal setting and discusses its success in various settings. The review concludes by focusing on the use of goals and goal setting skills to enhance the educational success of adult learners.

Nature of the Topic

Globalization, technological advances and demographic shifts are accelerating change. Increased and ongoing adult learning is a key means for individuals and nations to adapt to those changes effectively (Carnevale et al., 1990; Cross, 1981; Kimmerling, 1992; Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, 1991; Porter, 1991; Prosperity Secretariat, 1991b). And over the previous decades, participation in adult education has reached unprecedented levels (Charner & Fraser, 1986; Law, 1992).

Because of the dramatic changes to the labour market under-educated adults face socioeconomic pressures to return to a setting that, to them, may be synonymous with frustration and failure (Cross, 1981; Fagan, 1991; Mahaffey, 1983; Mezirow, Darkenwald & Knox, 1975). Initial and ongoing success is important in retaining these learners. As the need for more training and education increases on an individual and societal level, that success becomes critical (Porter, 1991; Thomas, 1983; Wilson, 1979).

Adult learners are noted for their pragmatism and goal-orientation (Brookfield, 1986; Houle, 1961; Knowles, 1980; Waldron & Moore, 1991). However, goal setting has rarely been systematically explored in adult education settings. Because of its success in other adult endeavors (business and industry), goal setting is a promising strategy to assist these learners "win" at the reentry game.

Adult Learning and Learners

"Acceleration" characterizes contemporary adult education (Crompton, 1992; Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Although writers caution that participation rates vary widely according to how adult education is defined and what methodology and analysis are used (Brookfield, 1986; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982), growth is evident and dramatic. The first major participation study for this learner group was conducted almost three decades ago in the United States by Johnstone and Rivera (Cross, 1981). That study, where learning activities could range from self-study to full-time instruction, reported that almost a quarter (22%) of adults over age 21 participated in some form of learning activity. When more narrowly defined to exclude full-time or self study, participation rates still increased from 10% in 1969 to 14% in 1984 (Cross, 1981; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Organized adult education participation rates, however, increased even more -- 38% between 1969 and 1978 -- while full-time college enrollment of traditional younger students was declining (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982).

Canadian statistics dramatically reinforce the trend of accelerating participation in adult education. In 1990-91 over one million Canadian adults participated in organized full and part-time studies (1992 Corpus almanac, p. 7-2). In the last decade participation rates in continuing education activities have grown by over 700% and the number of course offerings have grown by 1100% (Project Report, 1986, p. 12). Community college statistics are equally revealing: in 1960-1961, 29 colleges served 9,000 learners;

by 1990-1991, 324,550 students attended 204 colleges (1992 Corpus almanac, p. 7-12). Darkenwald and Merriam conclude their discussion of adult participation rates by predicting, "If deep-rooted technological and social changes continue to transform modern societies through the end of the century, the future of adult education will surely be one of continued growth" (1982, p. 123).

Although participation studies have been conducted for almost 30 years, writers emphasize the relative constancy of the typical adult learner (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). That typical learner is a married, white parent with a high school education, with a higher occupation and socioeconomic status (Charner & Fraser, 1986; Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Long, 1983). Writers generally agree that the most significant sociodemographic factor influencing participation is the level of previous formal education (Crompton, 1992; Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Long, 1983; Rubenson, 1984; Waldron & Moore, 1991).

Prior to 1961, research into adult learner motivation was self-reported and, according to Darkenwald (1977), "primitive." The first systematic census-like survey by Johnstone and Rivera in 1962 found that adults learn practical, applied skills not academic theoretical knowledge and information (Cross, 1981). Subsequent researchers confirm the practical nature of adult learning (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Knowles, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Rossing & Long, 1981; Waldron & Moore, 1991).

Researchers are also interested in why adults do not participate in continuing education. Cross (1981) organizes educational barriers into three categories: situational, institutional, and dispositional. Charters (1986) provides a comprehensive list of each type of barrier. Situational barriers -- external factors most immediately affecting the person -- are the strongest, specifically the lack of time and money. Time cuts across all socioeconomic levels as a deterrent (Long, 1983; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990; Watt & Boss, 1987); cost, however, is particularly mentioned by lower socioeconomic levels (Cross, 1981; Long, 1983; Rubenson, 1984). Institutional barriers (called "structural" by

Charters) are factors associated with the educational provider like course scheduling, cost, and information about courses. For adult learners, the major institutional barrier is the requirement to attend on a full time basis. Their major dispositional or psychological barrier is lack of self confidence (Cross, 1981).

Research into participation barriers raises methodological issues. Cross (1981) argues that, although time and money are consistently identified as the major barriers, those reasons are socially acceptable reasons and may not reflect the reality of nonparticipants. She suggests that attitudinal or dispositional factors are greater pointing out the dramatically higher participation rates for high school completers. Rubenson (1984) supports this view by outlining studies that indicate unwillingness of people to reveal their own lack of interest or self confidence. Because individuals with more education participate disproportionately in adult education, the major challenge to educational providers appears to be overcoming barriers and reaching adults not predisposed to continuing their education (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984; Learning is Living, 1982; Rubenson, 1984; Winterstein, 1982).

Basic Skills Learners

Statistics show that although educational expenditures have increased by 27 times since 1971, the number of people with high school education has decreased (Canadian global almanac, 1992). With dropout rates in Canada at 30% and the need for a higher skilled work force, the need for effective adult basic skill training will also increase. Yet those who are least educated are the most reluctant to participate in further education (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). In Canada, only 2.4% of under-educated adults participate in formal education programs compared to 17.4% of the general adult population (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984). In the United States participation rates for the under-educated population are also low; a comprehensive study in 1976 indicated that only 4.3% of those qualified to participate in ABE did so (Academic American, 1986;

Valentine & Darkenwald, 1988).

Obtaining further education is particularly important to the ABE/AU population. The Academic-American Encyclopedia (1986) describes adult education as the way "...to bring about a more equitable distribution of the opportunities of the society" (p. 110). The link between education and income is well established. Each increase in income level corresponds to an increase in educational participation (Charner & Fraser, 1986). Grotelueschen, Gooler, & Knox (1976) report that high school graduates earn twice the income of those with less than a grade 8 education who in turn earn 50% more than those with only an elementary education. In addition, people with a lower education have less opportunity to earn an income. According to the Canadian Association of Adult Education, only 60% of those under grade 9 are working and, although they constitute 21% of the population, they are only 12% of the working population (Project Report, 1986).

Although the pattern of low education levels being linked with low incomes is not recent (Morrison, 1970), a new concern is emerging as the number of people with lower income levels is increasing. If adults do not gain the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes, the literature suggests their opportunities to thrive or perhaps even to support themselves and their families will continue to erode (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984; Kidd, 1973; Porter, 1991; Rubenson, 1984; Webb, 1970).

Demographic trends include and reinforce factors that undermine ABE/GED learners' academic success. Studies consistently include learners who face economic and emotional challenges. They are often unemployed or on social assistance. Female students are often mature women with dependent children; they are likely to be unemployed and may also be single parents (Darkenwald and Valentine; 1985; Delker, 1984; MacKeracher & DeCoito, 1984; Seppanen, 1991). Another important demographic factor is the highly transient nature of this group. Seppanen (1991) found that ABE and GED students are twice as likely to lack directory information. The factors of economic

constraints, family responsibilities, unstable personal lives and lower academic abilities interact to add further pressure to the struggling ABE/AU learner tenuously re-entering a threatening learning environment.

Psychological factors also undermine the success of under educated returning adult learners. The profile of anxious, untrusting ABE/GED participants appears throughout the literature. Anderson and Neimi write that these learners have "...a tendency to withdraw into [their] own conceptual and social world" (in Wilson, 1979). Martin & Fisher (1989) report such adult learners have less personal sense of freedom and are more dependent on their friends and family. Academically these learners are likely to have lower scholastic and social abilities, tend to take fewer courses, choose those courses poorly, and generally have a less academically stimulating domestic environment.

Helpful as categorization is, however, writers caution against assuming any adult learners are homogeneous. In fact, Mezirow et al. (1975) emphasize the ABE population includes "A range of diversity of student participants probably unprecedented in American education is the most significant distinguishing characteristic of ABE classes" (p. 11). Beder and Valentine (1990) identify up to 6 categories of learners within an ABE population while Valentine & Darkenwald (1986) describe 5 types of GED graduates. Martin's study (1987) resulted in a life-style classification of 6 nonparticipant groups based on income and "degree of socially acceptable behavior." The diversity of learners within an ABE/AU educational setting presents a further challenge to program providers and to the learners themselves.

The literature also suggests there are differences between the motivation of ABE/AU learners and general adult learners. While participation studies since Johnstone and Rivera have found practical, career-based reasons predominate for learning, studies of basic skills learners report a strong tendency to participate for affective reasons -- to "feel better about themselves." In a study of GED participants, Delker (1984) reported

that 76% of the learners attended for self satisfaction as compared to 55.7% attending for college entrance and 43% for job skills improvement. Similarly, Seppanen (1991) reported that 77% of ABE learners in a Washington County study cited "feel better about myself" as their primary program goal.

Reentry learners' focus on self esteem is understandable given the respect our society accords to education. Fisher and Martin (1989) argue that, "In both the U.S. and Canada, the high school diploma has come to symbolize that its holder possesses the social values and attitude espoused by the larger society and the knowledge and skills necessary for employment in the secondary labor market (that is, in occupations requiring minimal skills) or for the pursuit of further education" (p. 480). According to the goals of ABE/AU learners, it appears that alleviating the psychological stigma of not achieving our society's "basic level" of education may be as important or more important than the credential itself.

Studies indicate that ABE/AU programs help these learners achieve their goals; increases in the critical factor of self esteem are particularly striking. For example, Valentine and Darkenwald (1986) note that 94.2% of the participants said they felt better about themselves and 98.8% of the parent sub population said they set a better example for their children. Other benefits Valentine & Darkenwald report are job advancement, increased employment, enhanced self image and further education. To illustrate the possible effect of upgrading programs, while employment statistics for the state indicated a 2% increase in general employment, GED graduates report a 13% increase. However, Valentine & Darkenwald conclude that "Perhaps the most striking finding in response to the "one most important benefit" question is the large proportion of respondents who report indirect, affective outcomes related to enhanced self-confidence or self-esteem" (p. 22). These are very important benefits because they are prerequisites to beginning the cycle of educational self confidence and increased educational participation that can shift not only an individual, but a family into ongoing educational and thus societal success.

Countering the psychological and socioeconomic motivation to return to formal studies, are barriers that reduce the enrollment or program completion rates of these learners. Institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers were introduced earlier regarding general adult education participation. Rachal et al. (1987) suggest "...the impact of these barriers is likely to be exacerbated among potential ABE students..." (p. 2). Cross (1981) found that was particularly true for the situational barrier of cost. One example of how this group would face additional financial barriers is that employers of low income earners are less likely to support continued studies (Crompton, 1992; Long, 1983).

The authors of Last Gamble on Education (1975) describe situational factors that add "countervailing pressures" to the reentry learner: "...unstable jobs, fatigue, family responsibilities, residential mobility, the need to supplement principal sources of income, and involvement with public agencies." The authors also describe institutional barriers that are probably less prevalent for already successful, motivated middle class learners: "...transportation costs and distances, the threat of being criminally accosted at night in inner-city locations, and lack of child-care facilities" (p. 12). Another institutional barrier emphasized in studies of low income populations is the "red tape" involved in accessing programs (Long, 1983).

As mentioned previously, dispositional barriers are strong for this group (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Hayes and Darkenwald, 1988; Watt and Boss, 1987). Mezirow et al. (1975) highlighted dispositional barriers: "ABE students, especially men, come to class with such diminished self-images that any small reversal can evoke echoes of a dozen other humiliations" (p. 32). In a study of 555 blue collar workers, lack of self confidence again predominated for males (Long, 1983). However, other studies report that lower socioeconomic women also need assistance to overcome dispositional barriers. In a major Canadian study, women placed the need for developing self confidence and assertiveness well ahead of academic courses (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984).

Similarly, practitioners working with these women recommend that institutions be prepared to help these learners deal with psychological problems like low self esteem and depression (Suchinski, 1982).

Because of these barriers, ABE learners face a major challenge when re-entering an educational program. However, continuing and completing that program may be an even greater challenge. Martin and Fisher (1989) report a 40-60% absenteeism rate for this population and a completion rate of only 16%. Reasons for dropout vary. Rachel, Jackson & Leonard (1987) found situational dropout factors predominated in their study of 76 dropouts and 35 completers. Self-reported attrition reasons included trouble getting to class, childcare and job responsibilities.

Studies on reasons for program dropout yield contradictory findings. Using the Classroom Environmental Scale, Darkenwald and Gavin (1987) focused on social involvement and found that dropouts preferred less interaction and friendship with classmates. Yet when Martin (1990) studied 183 students from inner city adult literacy classes he found academic factors predominated. Persisters appeared to be more integrated into the academic environment; they participated in organized discussion, made more effort to learn, and respected and rated the instructor's knowledge more highly.

Student goals and goal setting appear in several studies focusing on reentry learners and dropout. Using multivariate analysis, Garrison (1985) found that AU learners with less academic ability and lower self images tended to set unrealistic goals with similarly unrealistic program expectations. The resulting incongruence between their expectations and their experience led to dropout. Daniels (1990) found that learner goals could also affect persistence positively; those individuals with the intention of graduating seemed to be more persistent.

However, Daniels also suggests that institutions should use student goals rather than institutional goals to measure student success arguing that community college

students do not fit the four year college model. To nontraditional students, "success" could mean a result other than program completion. Followup studies of nonreturning community college students support Daniels' proposition and suggest that dropout or "stopout" may be a normal pattern for this student group. Research indicates that for these learners leaving the college before completion may actually signify achievement rather than failure. Flaherty and Lucas (1989) presented findings on 12 surveys of 2255 non returning community college students between 1974 to 1986. In those findings the major reason for learners not returning to complete their program was that they had already achieved their educational goals. In two studies Tichenor (1988) found that only 16% had permanently dropped out without achieving their educational goals in 1985; in 1987 only 10% had done so.

It appears that if educational institutions plan to recruit and effectively serve the growing nontraditional mature student population, they may have to implement strategies to assist students with those responsibilities which can cause adults to stopout or dropout of educational programs. In addition institutions may have to redefine successful completion of a program and support these learners to the stage of program completion that corresponds to individual learner needs and objectives.

Reentry Women

Because of their socioeconomic environment and their failure in the educational system, female ABE participants face more challenges in reaching their educational goals than either male ABE learners or traditional female learners (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984; Rice & Meyer, 1982). However some barriers affect women re-entering education regardless of their education or socioeconomic level (Long, 1983). Therefore, this section includes information on reentry women in general and on ABE reentry women in particular. Also, because for women work and education are so closely related, both topics will be addressed here.

The influx of women into the workplace and educational institutions has been a dramatic North American pattern since the mid-century (Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Hetherington & Hudson, 1981; Morrison & Rubenson, 1989; Simpkins & Ray, 1983). Rubenson (1983) describes this pattern as "spectacular." The forces described earlier -- accelerating technology, globalization, and demographics -- have contributed to the economic motivation causing women to return to education and to employment outside the home (Cross, 1981; Rice and Meyer, 1982).

And women have been entering both settings at a growing rate. In 1940, 29% of women worked out of the home; by 1989 66% of women did so (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Since the 1960s the increasing divorce rates have accelerated the single mother's need for paid employment (Cross, 1981; Gwilliam, 1989). Currently over 42% of working women are sole income earners (Braundy, 1992). The increase of mature women on campuses is equally dramatic (Fadale & Winter, 1991; Kirk & Dorfman, 1983; Rice & Meyer, 1982). Now the typical community college student is a divorced mother in her late twenties (Coll & House, n.d.). Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) write that between 1969 to 1975 women participating in adult education increased by 45% compared to an increase of 18% for males. Women continue to be the fastest growing segment of postsecondary populations (Simpkins & Ray, 1983; Statistics Canada, 1990).

However, once in the work and school setting, women encounter limitations not facing their male counterparts. On the job women get less support to advance their skills. A 1986 Statistics Canada study found women received only 39% of the full-time employer-supported training that men received (Morrison & Rubenson, 1989). After reviewing the literature, Cross (1981) concluded that women are the only population group to largely fund their own education, therefore, unsurprisingly women more often cite cost as an educational barrier. This lack of support for ongoing training contributes to the fact that although women are over half of the adult population and 44% of the work force, (Gwilliam, 1989) they do not receive equal pay. The quarter of working women

who are under-educated make half the salary of their educational male counterparts. But education does not guarantee pay equity. Although women with higher education earn more than under-educated women, they still earn less than an equally educated man (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984; Statistics Canada, 1990).

Functionally illiterate women are triply disadvantaged because they are under-educated, conditioned to avoid more stable nontraditional occupations, and have not developed the basic skills that will allow them to enter those occupations. An estimated 23.7% (almost 4 million people) of Canada's adult population are functionally illiterate or have less than a grade 9 education. One fourth of the female population are functionally illiterate; however, only 2% attend educational programs compared to 2.8% of functionally illiterate men (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984).

Despite their increasing levels of education, women tend to limit their career plans and skills because of their socialization as primary caregivers (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Women continue to move into traditional female occupations that offer less promotional opportunity or transferability and are "...particularly vulnerable to technological change" (Gwilliam, 1989, p. 10).

A major barrier facing women in work and education is the need for child care (Cross, 1981; Grant, 1991; Long, 1987). That barrier emerges repeatedly in the literature, especially for poorer women (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Long, 1983; Watt & Boss, 1987). In their study of ABE women in Canada, DeCoito and MacKeracher (1984) found that providers identified lack of childcare options as the primary reason ABE women could not attend classes regularly. Yet few providers linked academic performance with personal responsibilities like childcare. In addition to the increased physical demands of studies, research indicates these women also take on an additional psychological burden by not being as available for their caretaker role (Gwilliam, 1989; Kirk & Dorfman, 1983; Rice & Meyer, 1982). As a result such women commonly experience the additional stress of multiple roles (Braundy, 1992; Grant, 1991; Rice and Meyer, 1982).

Next to the need for childcare, dispositional barriers are the second greatest educational barrier for reentry women. Forty two percent of counselors interviewed by Winterstein stated that mature reentry women had a "marked or excessive need for assertiveness training" (1982, p. 22). Almost half (46%) of the counselors said the women also needed leadership and communication skills; participants in DeCoito & MacKeracher's study (1984) ranked the need for assistance with personal skills highly, slightly ahead of "childcare." Because of the additional barriers facing reentry women in general and poorer reentry women in particular, special attention to their situational and dispositional barriers is important for these learners to persist in educational programs.

Basic Skills Programs

Because ABE/AU learners face compounded barriers to participation, programs must be "planned and implemented with unusual sensitivity" to the needs of the client (Thomas, 1983). Otherwise the program may be perceived as beneficial to the administration rather than to the learner. Fagan (1991) suggests this approach "...is likely to affect motivation, goals and learning outcome -- and unfortunately in a negative manner" (p. 28).

Guidelines for effective ABE/AU programs emerge from the literature. As with general adult learners, programs should be based on the needs of the learners and should reflect the fundamental adult learning principles outlined by Knowles (1980). Those principles include voluntary participation; developing a physically and psychologically comfortable climate; involving learners in needs identification and program planning; facilitating a learning process of mutual inquiry based on learner experience; and assisting learners to "rediagnose" their own learning needs. Effective ABE and adult secondary education (ASE) programs have similar characteristics. Key factors are that clear objectives are developed and achieved; learner needs are carefully analyzed; explicit evaluation standards for both the learners and the program are applied; and learners

receive ongoing feedback (Martin & Fisher, 1989; Taylor, 1989).

Despite the emphasis on careful planning, good ABE/AU programs are also strikingly flexible (Herman et al., 1983; Mezirow et al., 1975). Flexibility is an important response to the diversity of the learners and to their negative history with traditional, rigid educational programs (Grotelueschen et al., 1976; Martin, 1990; Mezirow et al., 1975; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). Ideally that flexibility is highlighted in the classroom where instructional methods and materials should vary according to learner needs and preferences (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984; Fagan, 1991; Mezirow et al., 1975; Taylor, 1989; Thomas, 1983).

In addition to flexible programs, the literature emphasizes the importance of effective, dedicated instructors to program success (Fagan, 1991; Martin, 1979; Mezirow et al., 1975). Research reinforce Grotelueschen et al.'s (1976) conclusion that "The adult basic education teacher is probably the most critical link in the adult basic educational program" (p. 201). According to diverse studies reviewed by Philips and Ballorado (in Taylor, 1989), the teacher's acceptance of and respect for the learners' life situations is critical particularly in ABE/AU situations where the learner's trust for instructors and education needs to be regained. Martin (1990) found that a characteristic of more successful learners was a higher level of interaction with instructors. Charters (1987) says the lack of appropriately trained personnel "including skilled teachers" may be the "biggest challenge facing adult education today." He notes this is an international problem. Given the challenging client group in ABE, good instructors are particularly important in these programs.

Other flexible program components regarding the upgrading classroom can include curricula choice, entry and exit policies, rate of progress; and evaluation criteria (Herman et al., 1983). Because these learners may be reluctant to re-enter a formal educational setting, program locations should be flexible, ranging from community centers and churches to shopping centers and county jails (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982;

Herman, 1983; Mezirow et al., 1975; Vanis & Mills, 1987).

A tension is evident in the literature between the need for flexible program responsiveness to the learner and the need to accommodate external factors that impinge on program flexibility. Goals of the program and of students themselves can require that external factors dictate program components. A high school equivalency or GED program may require a prescribed curriculum (Draper & Clark, 1980; Martin & Fisher, 1989). However, the funding body is a major external factor or "community agency" that affects ABE/AU programs because, unlike many other types of adult education, most ABE/AU programs are publicly funded (Draper & Clark, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Porter, 1991). Researchers and practitioners are concerned about the impact of funders' priorities and goals. One concern is that program personnel can measure a program's success by whether it meets the criteria for ongoing funding. Therefore, readily measurable factors like attendance and course completion can be more highly valued than the less measurable results of increased self confidence and self esteem (Mezirow et al., 1975).

A broader concern regarding funding is a trend toward "prescribed curricula." Merriam and Caffarella (1991) suggest that, despite elegant rhetoric about enhancing human potential, the current focus on vocational education is an effort by policy makers to maintain the status quo which would be disrupted by "Thousands of illiterate, unemployed, or under employed adults with nothing to do and no money to do it..." (p. 277). Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) also express concern about policies that "...have increasingly emphasized, and even mandated, closer linkages between adult basic education and job training programs" (p. 31). Their research indicates that participants gain much broader benefits from ABE programs. Similarly, Martin and Fisher (1989) caution against a vocational focus saying that a program's success will depend on the "balance between utilitarian goals established by funding sources and the broader outcomes sought by participants" (p. 481).

This section of Chapter 2 reviewed the current context for adult education, participation rates, typical adult learners, their motivations and their barriers. Then literature on the reentry ABE/AU learner and features of effective ABE/AU programs was summarized. The next section focuses on literature related to goal setting and the adult learner.

Goals

The final section of this literature review focuses on goal setting as a potential strategy to enhance adult learning, particularly for the reentry learner. First, the effectiveness and concept of goal setting are discussed, then the process of goal setting is examined. Next the evidence of goals and goal setting in the adult education literature is presented. This section concludes by discussing why goal setting is a particularly important and appropriate strategy for AU/ABE programs.

Evidence of Goal Setting Effectiveness

Locke, Shaw, Saarie & Latham (1981) have conducted the most comprehensive review of goal setting research to date. In examining over 110 studies conducted in laboratory and industry settings between 1968 and 1980, the authors found that 90% of the studies reported enhanced performance. Those studies involved a kaleidoscope of subjects ranging from pre-school and elementary children to loggers and scientists. Goal setting was applied in equally diverse processes. Physical activities included logging, ship loading, and building tinker toys; mental activities included brainstorming, learning prose, adding, and playing chess. Locke, Shaw, Saarie & Latham (1981) noted that the majority of experiments, especially those in laboratory settings, were well-designed and controlled.

Complex field studies have been conducted; these too have shown positive results. Pritchard (1988) designed a three stage study to explore the effects of group

feedback, goal setting, and incentives on group worker productivity. After five months of group level feedback, productivity increased 50%; after five months of goal setting productivity increased 75% over the baseline. Subsequent time off incentives only increased productivity to 76%. In the meantime, a control group had shown little or no change in productivity. Studies have also shown long term benefits for organizations that apply goal setting procedures. Locke and Latham (1986) report on a study where goal setting with only one work group in a company resulted in savings of over $250,000. Eight years later the benefits of goal setting were still effective. In addition the benefits are not limited geographically; international and cross cultural studies are confirming the effectiveness of goal setting in other countries (Erez and Earley, 1987; Punnett, 1986).

Goal setting continues to be effective and endorsed in various fields. In counseling, Childers (1987) describes helping clients set goals as "essential." A medical study reports that assigning specific time goals helped subjects tolerate pain longer and report less pain during laboratory techniques (Thorn & Williams, 1989). Even for retirees who no longer work in any occupation, having set and achieved goals at an earlier age resulted in greater satisfaction for men during retirement (Holahan, 1985).

In education, goal setting experiments have also yielded promising results. Preschool children benefited from goal setting and self evaluation (Honda, 1985), and senior high students show improved performance from setting challenging goals (Dweck, 1986). Even children who were behavior problems showed greater ability to control anger and function positively after goal setting treatment (Lochman & Lampron, 1985). A study also indicates that for teachers, instruction in goal setting can increase job satisfaction (Wooster, Hall & Woodhouse, 1986).

Carnevale, Gainer & Meltzer (1990) report on what is perhaps the broadest and most long term goal-related study. In that research, extending over 15 years, Charles Garfield from the University of California studied over 1000 highly successful individuals in various occupations. He reported that a common characteristic of these

individuals was their mastery of key goal setting skills. As a result of such data in their extensive research into the training needs of American companies, Carnevale, Gainer & Meltzer (1990) strongly recommend goal setting to enhance employee and organizational effectiveness. They conclude that "One of the most important steps in learning how to motivate oneself is to become goal conscious, that is, to accept the importance of goals and to learn how to set them" (p. 241).

The Concept and Process of Goal Setting

Like the concept itself, the definition of goal setting is deceptively simple. Locke and Latham (1984) define goal setting as "the object or aim of an action." They use it as an "umbrella term" for similar concepts like objective, task, or performance standard, pointing out that all the terms specify the direction and amount of an action. Despite its simplicity, goal setting is powerful. Locke and Latham state that goal setting is in some way incorporated in all major motivational theories. Carnevale, Gainer & Meltzer (1990) reinforce the comprehensive nature of goals from an organizational perspective describing goal setting as "integrative" because it contributes to and reinforces other work-related theories like job enrichment, operant learning conditioning theory, and expectancy theory. Similarly, after reviewing leading management motivation strategies, Terpstra (1979) summarizes common features then adds "...an emphasis on goal setting would seem to be motivationally advisable" and outlines the key points for effective goal setting (p. 379).

In the literature, guidelines for setting goals vary to some extent, depending on the population and, probably, on the learning preferences of the writer. However, the key factors of specificity, feedback, and measurement are consistently included. Also underlying effective goal setting is a key principle of adult education -- ensuring that goals are linked to an individual's needs and abilities. Acknowledged experts on goal setting in business, Locke and Latham (1984) suggest 7 steps for setting goals:

1. Specify what is to be done.
2. Specify how that performance will be measured.
3. Quantify the target and make it challenging.
4. Specify a time to do the task.
5. Prioritize goals if more than one is set and get consensus on that decision.
6. Quantify the importance and difficulty of the goals if necessary.
7. If several people are involved in achieving the goals, coordinate the requirements. (p. 40).

Carnevale, Gainer & Meltzer (1990) also write from a workplace perspective. However, they begin in a more "right brain" manner and include more "troubleshooting" steps than Locke and Latham. First, one should be able to realistically envision the goal. Then, after the standard steps of making the goal challenging, specific, and measurable, goals should then be broken down into subgoals and the required resources allocated. Finally, potential problems should be identified and strategies for avoiding or overcoming the problems planned. Childers (1987), in writing about goal setting as a counseling tool, adds elements that would be relevant to a more personal context like an ABE classroom. He recommends wording the goal positively, making sure it is under the individual's control and that it "belongs" to the person.

Ellis (1985) outlines 7 goal ("intention") setting steps specifically for adult students entering college. He offers more strategies than either Carnevale et al. (1990) or Childers (1987) for success, perhaps recognizing this group will likely be working at goal setting with minimal support. He too begins by suggesting goals be worded positively and be small and "keepable" then adds the quantifiable features -- establish measurable criteria and set timelines. Like Childers he recommends making goal achievement dependent only on the goal setter. He then adds further safeguards: consider how one can sabotage those goals and identify a reward for goal completion. To further reinforce the goals, Ellis suggests using affirmation cards, visualization, and taking time to internalize the positive feeling of goal accomplishment. Although the key steps are the same in these methods, the variations on planning and reinforcing goals suggest that goal setting

strategies should be "tailored" as much as possible to the environment and needs of the individual.

Locke and Latham (1984) have a simple explanation for why goal setting is so powerful. Fundamentally, goal setting works because it is reflects the "naturally purposeful" basis of rational human beings. Goals, they state "...direct attention and action, they mobilize energy and effort, they increase persistence, and they motivate the development of appropriate task strategies" (p. 26). They write that goal setting is used so rarely because it is a system that requires consistent planning and clarity about personal desires and abilities. Those characteristics are not commonly taught or reinforced in our society. But Garfield suggests there is one group that consistently uses goal setting -- very successful individuals. While those individuals had developed systematic planning methods like goal setting, he found that individuals who were not successful, "... regardless of career field, had no regular pattern of preparation, mental attitude, and methodology that they applied to life or work situations" (Locke & Latham, 1984, p. 234) However, Garfield felt such patterns and methodologies could be learned.

Setting and attaining goals is not simple. When goal setting was included in a teacher-training course, one teacher described the process as "very useful, if difficult" (Wooster, 1983, p. 86). Furthermore, to assume people have an innate goal setting ability can undermine professional and organizational effectiveness and personal efficacy. Chellino and Walker (1983) describe the problems they sought to alleviate in a major American company, problems that related directly to poor goal setting skills: inconsistent standards, unclear expectations, irregular feedback, punishment for not meeting expectations, and supervisors untrained in goal setting or performance appraisal.

Even individuals with an understanding of goal setting principles can undermine the use of goal setting by excluding a key component or by introducing the skills inappropriately. For example, Punnett (1986) administered a goal setting study to test the effect of specific versus unspecified goals. Two groups of upper elementary students

were the subjects and their task was to find spelling errors in a piece of writing. The performance resulted in only an 8% higher error identification rate for the group with a specific goal. Punnett acknowledged that the students were not given any basis for measurement or feedback, a key goal setting principle. However, other methodological concerns emerge regarding test administration. No pilot test or control group was used and the two groups were given their different instructions in the same room. Perhaps of greatest question is the timing of the test. The experiment was conducted 10 minutes before the end of a class. Those who have taught elementary or secondary school are aware of the implications such timing could have on student attention and effort.

Writers and researchers consistently stress the importance of several factors in successful goal setting. Goals must be specific (Locke & Latham, 1984; Mager, 1984; Tziner, 1988). That specificity facilitates another important aspect of effective goal setting -- regular feedback on goal progress. This feedback is directly connected to increased production even if feedback is from the self (Ruble, 1988; Szymanski, 1987) or even if the assigned task is boring (Phillips, 1988). Punnett (1986) attributes the effectiveness of rapid feedback to its ability to "encourage evaluation and control of behavior on an ongoing basis" (p. 40).

Goal effectiveness is also dependent on personal factors like ability and previous achievement. Individual ability determines the type of goal to be set. If the goal is unrealistic the goal will not be met (Biehler, 1974; Garrison, 1985). A person's experience in achieving goals and their motivation for doing so also impact their orientation to current goal setting. Dweck (1987) points out the importance of goal orientation. If a person holds learning goals where the process of acquiring new knowledge or skill is the measure of achievement, he or she will look upon new experiences as challenges and not avoid them despite initial incompetence. However, if individuals are performance oriented and their achievement and self esteem are based upon the approval and admiration of others, they may avoid new experiences which do

not show them as consistently effective.

That factor is critical. Self esteem, the method of feedback, and the purpose of learning or doing a task need to be constructive especially when dealing with low self-esteem individuals. Evaluation and feedback which constantly measures success against other people or constantly notes only failure can result in even lower self esteem than task and feedback avoidance (Biehler, 1974; Dweck, 1987; Ruble, 1988). If such feedback occurs in the context of a classroom dropout is inevitable.

The effectiveness of goal setting in increasing self confidence and motivation is described by Locke & Latham (1984):

> Goal setting is not only effective with scientists, managers, and educated blue collar workers; it also works with minorities. Uneducated black workers in the south have reported feelings of greater self-confidence, pride in achievement, and increased willingness to accept future challenges as a result of goal setting....Goal setting, especially participative goal setting, has been found to be effective in increasing performance and generating feelings of competency among [culturally and educationally disadvantaged employees] (p. 19).

Despite the effort needed to learn effective goal setting skills, the benefits suggest the effort is worthwhile. Direct benefits include: increased and higher quality productivity, clear expectations, relief from boredom, more liking for a task and more satisfaction with goal achievement after feedback, and further performance improvement due to recognition from peers and supervisors. The particularly promising benefit for AU/ABE classrooms is the increased self-confidence and a "willingness to accept future challenges as a result of goal setting" (Locke & Latham, 1984, p. 19). Meeting goals also involves the methodical development and use of other valuable skills like planning, decision-making and problem solving (Carnevale, Gainer & Villet, 1990).

Goals and Adult Education

In several ways adult education is an ideal environment for goal setting. Houle (1961) stressed the goal-oriented adult learner and subsequent writers and researchers consistently confirm that tendency (Brookfield, 1986; Cross, 1981; Knowles, 1980;

Knox, 1986; Waldron & Moore, 1991). Quigley and Oddgeirsson (1984) state, "Adult educators know that adults bring experience into the classroom, that they are goal oriented, and that they are characterized by their practicality" (p. 6). After reviewing various motivational studies, McClusky (in Rossing & Long, 1981) concluded, "Nothing motivates and sustains the learning of adults more than the sense of moving toward the achievement of objectives perceived by the learner as relevant to the satisfaction his (or her [sic]) needs (p. 26). McKenzie (1983) argues that program planning can be based on adults' high priority life goals because, "More than anything else the person is a goal-directed animal" (p. 20). Tough (1988) criticizes educators for not paying enough attention to learner goals stating that when they do, "...there's a whole lot of energy, a whole lot of power, a whole lot of sky rockets" (p.8).

Grabowski (1983) argues that increased attention to learner goals is inevitable. With declining enrollments, educational institutions will experience the pressure for accountability and performance standards already common in business. To attract and retain learners institutions will increasingly pay attention to learners' needs and develop programs that "pertain to proficiencies [learners] want to enhance" (1989, p. 62). The literature, however, indicates that time has not yet arrived. Martin and Fisher suggest there is a split between "narrowly utilitarian socioeconomic goals" of programs and funders and the broader outcomes of "social change, personal empowerment, development of critical thinking skills, and human dignity" (p. 481). Mahaffy (1983) notes that the compatibility of program goals and objectives is not empirically supported. Rather, the goals of the institution are broad and affective but the objectives focus on measurable skill and knowledge gain. This limited focus contradicts the diverse often affective goals learners bring with them to programs -- particularly ABE programs.

Quigley and Oddgeirsson (1984) bluntly state that literacy and ABE students, in particular, have been alienated by institutions where abstracted subject matter is taught in support of institutional goals. Schoenbeck (1970) stated that view earlier in a conference

presentation where he warned that seeing academics or a degree as the goal for practically-oriented learners may not reflect the reality of the learner who has already failed at that route. Fagan (1991) states that, "Individuals are never goalless," rather that their goals are inconsistent with program goals (p. 18). He cautions that unless learners are involved in the learning process the program belongs to the administration with a negative impact on "motivation, goals, and learning outcome" (p. 28).

Research into goal setting in adult education settings is emerging and, as in other settings, the results are positive. Wicker, Brown, Hagen, Boring & Wiehe (1991) began researching the impact of goal setting on college students' affective expectations while studying. Initially, the researchers expected students to feel negative about setting specific and difficult goals with a far from favorite pastime. Participants were directed to visualize themselves in different stages of studying for and taking a test. Surprisingly, the students responded more positively to specific and harder goals. Participants felt less aggression, more task importance, less coercion and external pressure with definite and challenging goals. The researchers also found that the perceived importance of and commitment to the goal were greater when the goal was difficult and specific. They conclude that the study "...suggests another reason to encourage use of goal setting in academic settings" (p. 246).

A goal-related study by Garrison (1985) is particularly important to upgrading programs and participants. In conducting research into goal setting and persistence in the ABE classroom, Garrison first found that goals seemed to be counterproductive. Students who dropped out reported they were certain of their goals and found their courses more relevant than those who persisted. However, further analysis indicated such students tended to have lower self confidence and ability, and tended to set unrealistic goals; they then dropped out when those unrealistic goals were not being achieved. Smith (1984) and Wilson (1979) also report that high school dropouts tend to have unrealistic expectations about their ability. These findings support Howard's (1989)

recommendation: "The adult educator should attempt early in the program to engage the individual learner in explicit goal setting, focusing on clarifying expectancies, regarding the learning situation" (p. 207).

Goal setting with ABE students is particularly valuable considering the low participation and high dropout rate. Fagan (1991) directly links learner persistence with goal clarity and commitment. He writes: "The degree to which a situation is perceived as a barrier depends on the individual's meaning or perception for a particular situation. Individuals with definite goals and who are highly motivated are more likely to overcome barriers to learning opportunities" (p. 20). Since goal setting is acknowledged as a key motivational strategy, it would seem vital that programs for ABE/AU learners include goal setting both in specific skill development sessions and as part of students interactions with counselors and instructors. These studies and observations suggest the ABE/AU classroom is not "goal neutral." If no formal, guided goal setting process exists in a program, learners will set informal goals that may be unrealistic and thereby invite frustration and failure (Fagan, 1991). Garrison's study indicates the serious personal and increasingly, societal, consequences of this lack of attention to student goals.

Summary

Dramatic changes are increasing the need for higher levels of education in our society. Rates of participation in adult education are rising accordingly but not for the low literacy individuals who need to increase their skill levels the most. Because of previous failure, a key characteristic of the AU/ABE student is the lack of educational self confidence. Special efforts must be made to create immediate and ongoing success for these learners. Research into goal setting with a wide range of populations consistently shows improved and successful performance. In addition, repeated references in the literature to the goal oriented nature of adult learners suggest that goal setting should be a particularly effective strategy in the adult classroom.

As the importance of ongoing learning increases in our society, adults who have not been successful in previous educational endeavors face daunting barriers to reentering and persisting in an educational setting. In seeking to research the goal setting experiences of this group, this study seeks to gather data that could guide program development and further research for the purpose of helping AU/ABE participants clarify and achieve their learning goals. Research into the effectiveness of goal setting suggests effective application of this strategy could assist reentry learners to change their history of failure in a formal learning setting into a pattern of ongoing, fulfilling participation.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between goal setting experiences and Program satisfaction of Lakeland College Academic Upgrading (AU) students. This chapter outlines the research methodology including the context, procedures and data analysis of the study.

Study Context

The focus on student goals arose out of a larger study conceptualized in 1989 by Lakeland College to evaluate its AU Program. In this section the evolution of both studies is reviewed. Lakeland College administrators and AU staff decided the evaluation would be comprehensive and involve its five campus sites and key stakeholder groups (both internal and external to the college). After preliminary planning by a college-based committee in the Spring of 1989, an external team was contracted in Fall, 1989 to conduct the evaluation. The team consisted of a University of Alberta professor, the dean of an Edmonton community college, and the author, a graduate student at the University of Alberta.

Two major objectives were identified for the evaluation:

1. to gather information for the purpose of effective decision-making with respect to the Program; and
2. to facilitate a process which would focus upon the goals, objectives, and operation of the Program and foster communication and team work among stakeholders (Brook, Quinney and Rachynski, 1990).

To achieve the objectives, the College committee and the evaluators selected six aspects of the Academic Upgrading Program as the basis of data collection: student goals, Program curriculum, Program delivery, course structure, student sponsorship, and services and resources.

Although goals were acknowledged as an important issue and one to be explored during the evaluation process, the extent of data collection and analysis related to student goals would be limited necessarily to the objectives of the evaluation study. However, the author saw this as an opportunity for further investigation into a concept and skill which had received little systematic attention in adult education. A proposal for an expansion of the goal component of the evaluation was discussed with the Dean of Program Services at Lakeland College. The Dean agreed to further questions on goal setting within the Program evaluation questionnaire designed for students.

This goal study, therefore, examines data gathered by an instrument administered as part of the larger evaluation study. In that larger study, however, the data specific to the goal section were not explored in depth and were not related to student Program satisfaction; thus the analyses of this study.

A combination of Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model and the stakeholder approach guided the evaluation methodology. A primary feature of the stakeholder model is the involvement of individuals or groups affected by a program and the results of the study (Smith & Glass, 1987). Therefore, current and former student representatives, several AU instructors, and site managers were on the evaluation planning committee contributing a variety of informed stakeholder perspectives to the survey instrument during its development and administration.

The evaluators selected diverse data gathering approaches in keeping with the comprehensive nature of the evaluation. Survey instruments were administered to AU instructors, former students, and current students. Sections of the current and former student questionnaires were similar, but goal-related questions were more general for the former students because of the time gap between their attendance and the study. For that reason former student data are not included in this analysis.

Information was also collected through individual and focus group interviews with students, College personnel, and external agents and through a review of AU

curriculum materials. In addition, because of the multicampus nature of Lakeland College, site visits were conducted. Prior to the site visits, notices were posted inviting staff and students to drop in sessions where they could discuss issues with a member of the evaluating team.

Stakeholders internal and external to the College were a major component of the study. Stakeholders from the College included College and Program administrators, receiving department heads (individuals administering programs into which AU students progressed or transferred), AU instructors, support staff, and current and former students; all had some involvement with the development and/or delivery of the AU Program.

External stakeholders participating in the evaluation through individual or focus group interviews were Program sponsors from Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Career Development and Employment, and Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. Representatives from agencies which sponsored students were also interviewed in a focus group. Those agencies included: Alberta Career Centers, Alberta Social Services, Alberta Vocational Training, Canada Employment Centers, Non-Status Indian and Metis Association, and the Workers' Compensation Board.

Instrumentation

For the larger evaluation project a survey questionnaire was selected as the main source of data collection from current students for its efficiency and economy (See Appendix A for questionnaire). The benefits of that data collection method also apply to the goal study. Because data were to be collected from five sites in northeastern Alberta, the questionnaire generated maximum information without prohibitive costs.

Another advantage of the questionnaire was its anonymity. While some educational surveys are signed, Borg and Gall (1979) note that if data are "of a personal nature or may be threatening to the individual...," anonymity is preferred. In this study, students enrolled in the AU Program would be cautious about evaluating the individuals

and the institution that were, in turn, evaluating student academic progress. Therefore, an anonymous questionnaire was considered critical to data collection from the student group.

Survey Instrument

The evaluation study was designed to explore the AU Program from student, organizational, and community perceptions unique to Lakeland College. Therefore, a questionnaire unique to the College was needed and designed.

In the instrument a combination of item formats was used. The majority of items were closed-ended to facilitate data analysis but several open-ended questions were provided for additional comments. Because Likert scales are an effective method of dealing with attitudes to issues (Merriam & Simpson, 1984), they were used throughout the questionnaire. Within question categories, "Other" options were provided regularly so respondents did not feel blocked from describing specific responses or experiences (Merriam & Simpson, 1984). For full information, respondents were asked to give details when selecting the "other" category i.e. "other (specify...)." Instrument scaling primarily used a 5 - point Likert scale with responses related to either satisfaction, agreement, or frequency depending on the nature of the question.

The current student questionnaire was organized into three major sections: student background information; goal setting experience prior to and during the Academic Upgrading Program; and student satisfaction with College resources and services. Each major section included several subsections; these are explained in the following sections as they apply to the study. For this investigation of goal setting experiences, selected questions from all three sections were utilized. Some questions were omitted because they were either too detailed or not relevant to this focus. The omissions are indicated in the following sections.

Part I. Background Information

Questions used from Part I of the questionnaire for this analysis asked about demographic data: student gender and marital status, number of children under age 12 living at home, child care arrangements during Program attendance and during children's illness, highest grade level prior to the Program, employment status upon enrolling, and how students heard about the AU Program. Questions excluded from Part I of the instrument because of irrelevance to this goal study dealt with campus site, time in the Program, registration status, and course enrollment.

Part II. Goals

Part II of the instrument consisted of three sections on student educational, career, and personal goals (sections A, B, and C respectively). Section A of the goals section dealt with identification of goals and reasons for goal changes; Section B explored student goal setting experience prior to and during the Program; and Section C related to student satisfaction with College resources in helping with goal identification and attainment.

The literature indicates that AU students arrive with diverse goals so it is important that the College not limit their Program to addressing only academic goals (Beder & Valentine, 1990). Three types of goals (educational, career, and personal) were included in this study because the Lakeland Academic Upgrading program strives for holistic student development. This objective is specified in the College goal statement regarding Academic Upgrading: "To offer a learning environment providing opportunities for the adult learner to become a more effective member of the community." To achieve that goal, the AU Program assists students with the development of: "...self-esteem, personal and interpersonal skills, an ideal of lifelong learning, knowledge and academic skills, and strategies necessary to succeed in further education and careers" (Lakeland College, 1988).

Section A. Educational Goals. In section A participants were first asked to identify up to three current educational goals from 9 options: completing specific courses, completing the AU Program, qualifying for further training, attending a college/technical institute, attending university, personal satisfaction, qualifying for a pay raise, improving employment opportunities, and "other." Then, for comparative purposes, students were requested to indicate up to three of those goal choices they held when entering the Academic Upgrading Program.

Students were then asked if their goals had changed and, if so, to again indicate up to three reasons for that change. Twelve variables given for the change: no change, improved self-esteem, family/friends, academic success, academic problems, College staff, career information, educational information, workshop/discussion, change in personal circumstances, change in family situation, and "other."

Section A. Career Goals. The next set of questions explored student career goals. Because of the extensive choices possible, students were asked to specify their career goal in an open-ended question. Then, they were asked whether that goal had changed and if so, to check up to three reasons for the change using the same 12 choice of responses given for educational goal changes listed above.

Section A. Personal Goals. Finally, personal goals were addressed. Because the focus of the study was on academic and career enhancement and because of the diversity of possible goals, choices were not specified for this section. Students were asked in general if they had set personal goals and if those goals had changed. If they had experienced a change in personal goals, students were again asked to indicate up to three reasons for the change from the same list used to identify educational and career changes: no change, improved self-esteem, family/friends, academic success, academic problems, College staff, career information, educational information, workshop/discussion, change

in personal circumstances, change in family situation, and "other."

Section B. Goal Setting Experience. Student goal setting experience was the focus of the next group of questions. Responses were based on a 5 - point Likert scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=regularly). These questions sought data on the extent to which students set goals independently and in conjunction with College influences.

First students were asked how often they set goals prior to and during the Program. Two specific College variables followed: how often goal setting was an activity in courses and how often instructors talked about student goals. Students were then asked about variables related to goal setting which could occur outside formal classroom activities. These included taking a goal setting course/workshop, talking to friends/students or to family members about one's goals. To conclude this section of the instrument, participants were asked how often they achieved the goals they set.

Section C. Satisfaction with Lakeland College Resources and Services. In Section C the questionnaire addressed the extent to which students perceived they had been satisfactorily assisted with their goals by 8 Lakeland College resources and services. Resources and services for student consideration were: department head, college counselor(s), instructor(s), regional manager/chairman, campus secretary/registrar/registrar staff, other students, career/sponsoring agency counselor and Lakeland College Calendar/Fact Sheet. Those variables were listed in 3 separate questions and students were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the College resources and services in helping them identify goals before enrolling in the Program (Question 1), plan goals during the Program (Question 2), and work toward goals while in the Program (Question 3). A 5 - point Likert scale (1=not applicable, 2=dissatisfied, 3=somewhat satisfied, 4=satisfied, or 5=very satisfied) was used to indicate student satisfaction during

their time in the Program. The open-ended question on how the College could help students identify, plan, and achieve educational, career, or personal goals will not be included in this analysis which focuses on the student goal setting experience itself. Two other questions were also omitted from this analysis because they were not directly related to goals: factors that led students to consider dropping out and satisfaction with college assistance in resolving problems that led to drop out considerations.

Part III. Program Information

Part III of the instrument focused on student satisfaction with specific components of the Program, and was divided into 6 subsections: (A) College support services, (B) Sponsoring agencies, (C) Instructional information, (D) Instructors, (E) Curriculum, and (F) Other Program factors. Questions from 5 of the 6 subsections were selected for further analysis in relation to student goal setting experiences and Program satisfaction.

Section A. Student Satisfaction with Support Services. Participants were asked to indicate their satisfaction with College support services on a 5 - point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=undecided; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree). The original questionnaire had 17 variables. For this analysis only 7 variables were used. These were selected according to the issues the literature suggested were of particular importance to AU learners and included: adequacy of library resources; adequacy of College counseling on campus; adequacy of personal counseling; helpfulness of student orientation; helpfulness of College administration and of instructors in solving Program problems; and access to College financial aid staff.

Section B. Student Satisfaction with Sponsoring Agencies. Section B was omitted because the College was limited in its ability to affect the learners' experience with sponsoring agencies.

Section C. Student Satisfaction with Instructional Information. In this section of the instrument, the same 5 - point Likert scale was used to indicate satisfaction with instructional information. Representative variables were selected which reflected principles of effective adult instruction (Knowles, 1980); indicated learners were able to meet their own academic goals (Garrison, 1985; Simpkins & Ray, 1983); and reflected the independence of the learner. Therefore students were asked if the workload was appropriate for the length of courses; if they were able to work at their own pace; if individual help was available to them; if the Program helped them learn how to learn; and if the individual liked making learning decisions.

In the evaluation questionnaire, students were then asked to compare the extent to which various instructional strategies used in the Program were strategies which the students preferred. The questions were not directly related to goal experience so were not included in this analysis. For the same reason the next series of questions about the extent to which the students were involved in planning components of the courses was also omitted.

Section D. Student Satisfaction with Instructors. In the section on instructors, participants were invited to use the 5 - point Likert scale (from 1 to 5: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree) to indicate their agreement with statements regarding their AU instructors. Of 8 questions, 4 were chosen which correspond to studies that outline the effective instructor as one whose skill is respected (Martin, 1990); who is sensitive, helpful and approachable (Fagan, 1991; Mezirow et al., 1975); and who provides appropriate feedback on academic performance (Martin & Fisher, 1989). Specifically, the first variable asked learners about the effectiveness of the instructor; the second asked how sensitive the instructor was to individual needs and interests; the third asked how satisfied the learner was with the instructor's assistance with personal problems; and finally learners were asked if they were satisfied with the

academic feedback they received.

Section E. Student Satisfaction with Curriculum. The same Likert scale was used to explore satisfaction with Program curriculum in the next series of questions. Five of 8 variables were selected. These related to current and future goals, and indicated if the Program corresponded to learner goals. The other two variables explored whether the learners felt they were given the necessary time and feedback to achieve their goals (Pritchard, 1987). Therefore, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with statements about the following Program components: appropriateness of the Program for their goals; whether courses developed abilities needed for future work; if course objectives supported student goals; if adequate time was available to complete the courses; and if students were satisfied with grading procedures.

Section F. Student Satisfaction with Other. Final questions relating to overall Program satisfaction were encapsulated in an "Other" section at the end of the instrument. Again the 5 - point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree) was used. Of 7 questions, 3 that relate most closely to goal setting were considered for the study. The first question, being placed at an appropriate level upon entering the Program, would enable students to set realistic goals. The second question, being adequately prepared for further education or work, could reflect whether the individuals had set and attained their goals. The third question, overall satisfaction with the Program, would reflect whether their holistic needs and goals were met at the College. The final open-ended questions about strengths, weaknesses and other comments about the Program were not analyzed for this study because of their general nature.

Pilot Testing and Revision

The instruments went through extensive development. In addition to refinements by the evaluation team, the questionnaire was reviewed by the planning committee during project planning meetings held at Lakeland College. To review the instrument, the committee formed groups representing the various stakeholders in the College: instructors, administrators, counselors, and students. Suggestions made by the groups were considered in the final revisions to the instruments. Adjustments to the questions were primarily of a content nature, clarifying and amplifying information in the background information specific to the Lakeland College AU Program.

Specifically, questions were added in the Background Information Section about how participants became aware of the AU Program and whether/how long participants had been in a preparatory Alberta Vocational Center Program prior to enrolling in the AU Program. Also the different options for participating in the AU Program were clarified in a question on registration status. In the Goal section the variable "placed on probation" was added to the dropout considerations question.

After initial revisions, the current student questionnaire and instructor questionnaire were pilot tested with those members of the planning committee at a meeting in Lakeland. Support staff who would administer the instruments were present at the meeting, and the evaluation team modeled the administration of the instrument and timed the process. As a result of the pilot testing, minor changes were made to clarify the wording of the dropout considerations question and to the wording of a sponsoring agencies variable.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Content and construct validity of the questionnaire were guided by the key objectives for the Program evaluation and were determined by the planning committee. Clarity and comprehension were refined by pilot testing and repeated instrument revision.

No formal measures were taken to determine reliability of the instrument. However, the emphasis on clarity throughout the instrument development makes it likely that, in future administration, the instrument would be interpreted similarly. Additional data were gathered in the major study to support those gathered through the current student questionnaire. Focus group interviews with both current and former students were conducted, and a former student instrument was also administered. These interview findings do not constitute a component of this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Population and Sample

The current student and instructor questionnaires were administered at each of the five Lakeland AU sites simultaneously in February, 1990. All students enrolled in the Program were invited to complete the instrument. The enrollment statistics obtained from the College set current student registration at 189.

Accordingly, questionnaires were sent to the sites; 143 questionnaires were completed and returned. The figures were checked with Lakeland College staff after administration to confirm enrollment. The discrepancy between enrollment figures and the number of respondents was attributed to the semester having ended at the largest campus of the Program. Consequently many students were not present at the administration of the questionnaire. (It should be noted that attendance in the Program is a site-specific policy and was not closely monitored at all sites). However, it is assumed that the majority of students actually enrolled in and participating in classes did have the opportunity to complete the questionnaire. All students had been informed throughout the planning phase that they would have an opportunity to participate in the evaluation.

Administration of Instrument

College staff were utilized to oversee the questionnaire administration. As

discussed previously, support staff who would be administering the questionnaires at each of the 5 sites were invited to the pilot testing in January, 1990, at the main campus and were present as the evaluators outlined the purpose of and procedure for completing the questionnaires to the pilot test subjects. These staff personnel were also present during the subsequent discussions regarding the instrument and the administration.

In addition, a detailed Questionnaire Administration Guideline sheet (see Appendix B) was sent to those who were to administer the instruments. These guidelines accompanied the questionnaires which were sent to the five sites by government courier immediately prior to the day scheduled for administration. An attached Cover Memorandum to the administrators (see Appendix C) stressed the importance of following the guidelines, of not allowing the questionnaires to be completed out of class at any other time, and of ensuring that all completed and blank questionnaires were returned.

The Guidelines reviewed the role of the instrument administrator and the introductory procedures. The staff members were instructed to read the majority of the Guidelines aloud to the participants prior to distributing the questionnaire. Points to stress included the importance of completing the questionnaire and an invitation to the scheduled focus group. Students were reminded that participation in the questionnaire was voluntary and they could stop at any point. They were also informed about the approximate completion time, the confidential nature of the instrument, and the importance of not writing in the coding column. They were told questions would be addressed individually and were asked to avoid disturbing other individuals when asking questions during the writing time. Support staff were reminded to deal with questions quietly and not to lead participants to answers when responding to questions.

After instrument completion, the staff person was to immediately count the questionnaires to ensure all copies had been returned, package the questionnaires, and return them by government courier to the evaluators.

Data Scoring, Analysis and Presentation

The data were coded and keypunched at the Division of Educational Research Services at the University of Alberta in March, 1990 then verified by division staff. Additional verification was conducted by the evaluators checking the coding on a sample of 12 randomly selected questionnaires.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSX) program. The initial output included frequencies, percentage distributions and central distributions for each variable. Subsequently, some categories were collapsed to facilitate further analysis and new frequencies computed. At that point, crosstabulation analysis was carried out among selected variables from background information, goal experiences, and Program satisfaction components of the questionnaire. Data presentation of findings in the next chapter is in the form of tables and narration.

Summary

This goal study was carried out within a larger comprehensive evaluation study of the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Program in northeastern Alberta. Appropriate to the comprehensive nature of the initial evaluation study, several types of data collection were used but for this research study only relevant parts of the current student questionnaire were considered for more indepth analysis of the relationship of goal experiences and Program satisfaction.

The questionnaire was developed then revised in conjunction with the planning committee and contained three major sections: background student information, goal setting experiences, and Program satisfaction. The questionnaire was pilot tested, revised, and administered simultaneously to students at five campus sites by support staff trained in the administration procedure. Data were scored and coded by the evaluation team then analyzed with the SPSSX computer program. The findings are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings about the goal setting experiences and Program satisfaction of Lakeland College Academic Upgrading students. First, background information is presented on the Lakeland College AU learner. Then the first research question is addressed: "What were the goal setting experiences of students prior to and during the AU Program at Lakeland College?" In this section data are presented about student goals and student goal-related experiences. After outlining student goal setting experiences, the second research question is addressed: "What is the relationship of student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland AU Program?"

To answer the second question, data on student satisfaction regarding selected Program components are outlined. Then results of crosstabulation analysis of the relationships among student goal setting experiences by Program satisfaction are examined. These findings are to be interpreted cautiously acknowledging the limitations noted in Chapter 1 (small population not randomly selected; instrument not formally validated and the term "goal" not standardized).

Background Information

The goal-related data were drawn from a questionnaire completed by 143 AU participants enrolled at five campuses of Lakeland College as part of a comprehensive Program evaluation study completed in 1990. Demographic data in the form of frequencies are presented in Table 1.

The majority of Program participants were between the ages of 21 - 40 (76%) and female (70%). An equal percentage of learners were single (40%) or married/common law (40%) with the remainder being separated or divorced. Two thirds of the students were responsible for children under 12 years old. Parents tended to use the services of

Table 1

Student Background Information (N=143)

		N	%
1.	**Age**		
	< 20 years	22	15
	21-25	35	25
	26-30	39	27
	31-40	34	24
	> 40	13	9
2.	**Gender**		
	Female	100	70
	Male	35	24
	No response	8	6
3.	**Marital status & Gender**		
	Single	56	40
	Married	56	40
	Separated/divorced	29	21
4.	**Children <12 yrs at home**		
	N/A	48	35
	1 - 2	70	50
	3 or more	21	15
5.	**Child care arrangements**		
	NA	61	48
	Daycare	48	38
	Relative	18	14
6.	**Child care when children sick**		
	NA	48	36
	Stay home	47	35
	Relative	23	17
	Day care	14	10
7.	**Highest formal education**		
	< Grade 9	29	22
	Grade 9	31	23
	Grade 10	34	25
	Grade 11	17	13
	Grade 12	24	18
8.	**Pre enrollment Status**		
	Unemployed	39	28
	On social assistance	36	26
	Employed full time	36	26
	Employed part time	16	13
9.	**Heard about AU Program**		
	Personal contact	83	56
	Media	35	23
	Counselor	31	21

daycare centres while attending classes. When children were ill, however, most parents chose to stay home.

Most of the AU learners (79%) had already achieved some level of high school education by the time of their enrollment in the AU Program. Almost a third reported completing grade 11 or higher; of those, 18% had already completed grade 12. Pre-enrollment status data indicate that more than half of the students were receiving some financial support prior to enrolling at Lakeland (26% reported being on social assistance and 28% being unemployed). A quarter of the student population had been employed full time and 13% were employed part-time prior to entering the Program. Collectively these social assistance, unemployment rates and part-time employment statistics suggest 67% of the participants could have been under-employed prior to beginning the Program. That percentage, however, may be higher because individuals who were employed full time chose to quit those full time positions to return to school; how much time elapsed from termination to enrollment is unknown. Data indicate that over half of AU participants received their information about educational programs from personal contacts.

Summary. The majority of Lakeland College AU learners were mature females with dependent children. Childcare was provided by daycare centres but when the children were ill most parents stayed home from classes. Students tended to have some highschool education and to have been un- or under-employed prior to enrollment. Program information was obtained primarily through personal contacts.

Goal Setting Experience

This section of the findings addresses the first research question regarding student goal setting experiences prior to and during the Lakeland College AU Program. To describe student goal setting experiences, data are presented in 3 sections according to the evaluation questionnaire. Data outline student goals and goal changes, student satisfaction with college resources in identifying, planning, and working toward goals,

and student participation in specified goal setting activities. First, descriptive statistics regarding the goals are presented, then statistically significant relationships are explored.

Student Goals

The first aspect of student goal setting experience described by the data is the educational, career, and personal goals of AU learners. Then the frequency of changes to those goals and reasons for the change were explored. The findings are presented in Table 2. Total responses may exceed the number of participants because individuals could select more than one response for some questions and several variables within the questions were subsequently collapsed.

Table 2

Student Goal Information (N = 143)

1. Student educational goals	**Enrollment Goal**				**Current Goal**	
	N	%			N	%
Qualify for further education/training	144	40			152	42
Complete AU courses/program	127	35			133	36
Enhance job/job opportunity	53	15			47	13
Personal satisfaction	36	10			33	9
2. Personal goals set	N	%				
Yes	120	85				
No	22	16				
3. Change in goals since enrollment	**Educational**		**Career**		**Personal**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	44	31	38	27	67	47
No	97	69	103	73	75	53
4. Reason for goal change	**Educational**		**Career**		**Personal**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Career decision making	48	27	44	30	70	36
Success (academic & self esteem)	43	24	29	19	50	26
Personal circumstances	20	11	6	4	33	17
Academic problems	9	5	3	2	7	3

Educational goals. Participants were asked to select variables that identified both their educational goals at the time of this study (February, 1990) and upon first enrolling

in the AU Program (September, 1989). The collapsed variables, with original variables indicated in brackets, were: *"qualify for further education/training"* (quality for further training; attend a college/technical institute; attend university); *"complete AU courses/Program"*; *"enhance job/job opportunity"* (quality for a pay raise; improve employment opportunities); and *"personal satisfaction."* As section 1 of Table 2 describes, qualifying for further education or training was the major educational goal for students both during and upon entering the AU Program.

Career goals. Because of the great variety in career goals, information on participant career goals was gathered through an open-ended question. Thematic analysis of responses further reinforced that students had a variety of vocational goals that, for the majority, would require further education. Those career directions included nursing, fish and wildlife officer, fine arts study, pharmacy, and accounting.

Personal goals. AU participants were asked for information about their personal goals. Because of the diversity of personal goals and because the specific nature of personal goals was not relevant to either the larger evaluation or secondary goal study, participants were simply asked whether they had set personal goals during the AU Program. The responses, outlined in section 2 of Table 2, indicate that the majority of individuals had set personal goals (85%).

Frequency of Goal Change. According to the data, participants did change goals in each of the categories as a result of attending the AU Program. Section 3 of Table 2 compares the frequency of each type of goal change. Personal goal change occurred the most frequently (47%) followed by educational goal change (31%) and career goal change (27%). The reasons for changing goals in each of the categories are outlined in section 4 of Table 2.

Reasons for Educational Goal Change. Changes in educational goals and motivation for those changes were explored in 4 variables. The variables were collapsed for ease of reporting and are outlined here with the original variables included in brackets. The reasons were: *"career decision making"* (college staff; career information; educational information and workshop/discussion); *"success"* (academic success; self esteem); *"personal circumstances"* (family/friends; change in personal circumstances; change in family situation); and a final variable, *"academic problems."* Of the 31% of participants who changed their educational goals, the reasons for the change were primarily "career decision making" (27%) and "success" (24%).

Reasons for Career Goal Change. The extent of and reasons for career goal changes were also explored. Participants were asked to select from the same variables as outlined for educational goal changes. Slightly fewer students changed their career goals (27%) than their educational goals (31%). Their reasons for career goal change related primarily to "career decision making" (30%).

Reasons for Personal Goal Change. A majority of learners (85%) had set personal goals and over half the participants (47%) changed those goals. The choice of reasons for the personal goal changes were again primarily "career decision making" (36%). However, slightly more individuals also selected "personal circumstances" as a reason for personal goal change than for educational or career change.

Over a quarter of the students changed their goals in each category. This suggests that either students did not have a clear idea of their goals upon entering the Program or that participation in the Program provided the students with information and/ or the type of experience needed to change their goals. The reasons for changing goals appeared to be positive involving acquiring career-related information, academic success, or increased self esteem. Although the motives for goal change were positive, the extent of goal change suggests that institutional assistance to help students effectively set realistic goals would be valuable.

Summary. Data about student educational, career, and personal goals indicate that Lakeland College AU students enrolled in the Program primarily to acquire skills and/or credentials for further education and training. The greatest goal change occurred with personal goals. In all three types of goal changes, "career decision making" was the predominant reason for goal change. The data show that over a quarter of AU learners made changes in their goals during the Program and such findings suggest that educational institutions can play a valuable role in assisting students with the goal planning and achievement process.

Goal Setting Activities

To gather more information on student goal setting experiences, the next section of the questionnaire gathered data on 8 student goal setting activity variables. Those variables consisted of:

- goal setting prior to enrolling in the Program (for ease of reporting, this variable is referred to as "prior goal setting" throughout the report)
- goal setting now
- goal setting in courses
- goal talk with instructors
- goal setting training
- goal talk with peers (other students/friends)
- goal talk with family
- goal achievement

Students were asked to select responses from a 5 - point Likert scale (0=never; 1=rarely; 2=sometimes; 3=often; and 4=regularly) to indicate the frequency of their participation in each goal setting activity. Section 1 of Table 3 outlines student ratings of that participation. For ease of discussion the responses are collapsed in the table to "never/rarely (N/R)"; "sometimes (S)"; and "often/regularly (O/R)."

According to section 1 of Table 3, students were notably less involved in goal-related activities prior to enrollment compared to after enrollment. Only 25% of the

participants had set goals often or regularly before entering the Program while 79% of the students reported setting goals often and regularly once enrolled. Although the goal setting activities had increased since students entered the Program, there was a discrepancy between current goal setting and goal achievement. While 79% of students reported they set goals often or regularly during the Program, only 55% of them achieved those goals often or regularly. This suggests that while students are motivated to set and work toward goals once they are in the AU Program, they may not be applying some aspects of goal setting effectively. The low number of participants who reported having participated in goal setting training often or regularly (11%) also suggests that most learners lack the knowledge and skills to fully understand and/or benefit from setting goals.

Table 3

Personal and College-Supported Goal Setting Experiences

1. Student Goal Setting Experience (% of Respondents)

Goal setting activity	N/R*	ST	O/R
Currently set goals	5	16	79
Achieve goals	6	39	55
Prior goal setting	34	41	25
Goal setting training	66	23	11
Talk about goals in courses	9	24	67
Talk with family about goals	12	27	61
Talk with peers about goals	16	35	49
Talk with instructor about goals	37	39	24

2. Satisfied or Very Satisfied Regarding College Help With Goals (% of N)

College resource	Identify Goals	Plan Goals	Work To Goals
Instructors	78	79	86
Calendar/courses	64	78	83
Students	53	72	74
Sponsor	69	67	70
Secretary/registrar	70	63	66
College counselor	64	67	65
Department head	65	60	62
Manager	58	55	61

*N/R = Never/Rarely; ST = Sometimes; O/R = Often or Regularly

Next, the goal setting activity questions explored the extent to which student goal setting experience included students talking about their goals with others. Responses regarding goal related discussion in the educational setting were surprising. While instructors are considered the most important elements in the ABE/AU classroom in the literature (Fagan, 1991; Grotelueschen et al., 1976; Martin, 1979; Mezirow et al., 1975), in this study learners discussed goals less with their instructors than with their families or peers. Some participants may have incorporated the interaction with instructors in their responses to "talk about goals in courses" which was the second highest type of goal setting activity that students participated in often or regularly. But the influence of the family and other students cannot be discounted.

Satisfaction with College Resources in Helping with Goals

AU learners were then asked about their satisfaction with the College in helping them identify, plan and work towards their goals. Those resources included instructors, the College calendar, students, sponsors, the secretary or registrar, the College counselor, the department head and the manager. Data are presented in section 2 of Table 3. The most satisfying resources in assisting learners identify, plan and work toward their goals were the instructors and calendar/courses. Satisfaction increased progressively with instructors and calendars/courses for the three stages (identifying, planning, working toward) of goal setting. Initial satisfaction upon entering the Program was rated highest for instructors (78%) with the next highest rate being for the secretary/registrar (70%).

Lower satisfaction rates were indicated for other types of college resources. Sponsor assistance with identifying goals was initially satisfactory or very satisfactory to 69% of students but showed virtually no increase in subsequent stages of goal planning and achievement. These data indicate that 30% of learners were undecided or unsatisfied about sponsor assistance. The literature identifies finances as a major educational barrier to adult learners and reentry learners in particular (Cross, 1981; Rachal et al., 1987).

College counselors, too, received a low to moderate satisfaction rating (64% - identification; 67% - planning; 70% - working toward) as resources in helping students with their goals. Considering that counselors are ideally a source of personal support to learners, a low satisfaction rating may be related to inadequate or inappropriate counseling support, thereby lowering student satisfaction with that Program component. The research also reinforces the importance of effective counseling for returning adult learners (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984; Suchinski, 1982). Satisfaction rates were low for the remaining administration staff (secretary/registrar; department head; manager) but that is understandable given the limited contact learners would have with those individuals.

Summary. This section presented data outlining student goals, goal changes, and student perceptions regarding College support of those goals. The increase in student goal setting since enrolling in the AU program was dramatic. There was inconsistency between frequency of goal setting and goal achievement. Most students (79%) reported setting goals often or regularly once in the Program although only half the students (55%) achieved their goals at that rate. Goal related discussion was primarily carried out with family and peers and less with instructors. The low rate of goal setting training may indicate that learners who had acquired goal setting competence may have primarily done so informally. The lower rate of goal achievement than goal setting suggests that learners would benefit from goal setting skill development. Instructors and the College calendar were rated as the most helpful in identifying, planning, and achieving student goals. Satisfaction rates with sponsors and college counselors were low enough to indicate almost a third of the students may be dissatisfied with these two important support services.

The Relationship Between Prior Goal Setting and Student Goal Setting Experiences

The next aspect of goal setting experiences to be explored was the relationship among prior and current student goal setting activities. There were no statistically significant relationships among the prior goal setting and educational, career, or personal goal change variables; however, descriptive statistics were drawn from the crosstabulation tables and reported in Table 4 to support conceptual discussion of the relationships. As Table 4 illustrates, the participants who often or regularly set goal prior to enrolling in the Program maintained their education, career and personal goals at least twice as often as students who never or rarely set prior goals. In the case of educational goals, those who set prior goals changed their goals 7 times less than those who never or rarely set prior goals. These data suggest that prior goal setting experience may reduce the extent to which students set inappropriate goals or change goals.

Table 4

Influence of Prior Goal Setting on Student Goal Change (% of N)

Prior Goal Setting	Education Goal Change	Career Goal Change	Personal Goal Change
Never/rarely	50	48	39
Sometimes	43	34	42
Often/regularly	7	19	20

The relationship between prior goal setting and the other goal setting activities was explored further through crosstabulation and is illustrated in Table 5 (that table is fully introduced in the next section). One statistically significant relationship emerged for prior goal setting; it involved the variable "goal talk with family." Since goal setting is not common in our society, the family may be the ideal environment in which to nurture and reinforce goal setting attitudes and activities. Data from the crosstabulation table show that 88% of the learners who set goals often or regularly prior to enrolling in the Program also talked about their goals with their family often or regularly.

Relationships Among Goal Setting Activities

Table 5 describes the findings from analysis of the crosstabulation and chi-square statistical test of significance regarding the 8 goal setting experience variables. For these variables, the instrument asked respondents to chose from a 5 - point Likert scale (0=never; 1=rarely; 2=sometimes; 3=often; 4=regularly). Initial crosstabulation analysis of these variables resulted in 5 x 5 tables; the scale was reduced to 3 points for ease of analysis (1 = never & rarely; 2 = sometimes; 3 = often & regularly). In Table 5 the degree of relationship (chi-square) between the goal setting activity variables resulting in a probability level less than or equal to .05, indicates the existence of a statistically significant relationship. The discussion of statistical findings also draws upon conceptual significance because statistical significance indicates that a relationship exists without identifying the source of that relationship.

Table 5

Statistical Significance of Goal Setting Activities by Each Other*

	Significant by							
Goal Setting Activities	GS Before	GS Now	GS Crse	GT Instr	GS Train	GT Peers	GT Family	Goal Achieve
Prior goal setting	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS
Goal setting now	NS	NS	*	NS	*	*	*	*
Goal setting in courses	NS	*	NS	*	NS	*	*	*
Goal talk with instructors	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	*	NS	NS
Goal setting training	NS	*	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS
Peer goal talk	NS	*	*	*	NS	NS	*	*
Family goal talk	*	*	*	NS	*	*	NS	*
Achieve goals	NS	*	*	NS	NS	*	*	NS

* GS=goal setting; GT=goal talk; Crse=course; Instr=instructor

Overall Patterns for Relationships Among Goal Setting Activity Variables. When the 8 goal setting activity variables were crosstabulated with each other, 30 (or 54%) of the 56 possible relationships were statistically significant. The greatest number of relationships occurred with the variables, "goal talk with family" (6), "goal setting now" (5), "goal setting in courses" (5), and "goal talk with peers" (5). Although a test of statistical significance does not indicate the cause of the relationship, the crosstabulation tables show a pattern that may account for most significant relationships. For most pairs of variables, a disproportionate number of responses are in the often or regular cell of both variables suggesting that when a student often or regularly participated in one type of goal setting activity, he or she tended to participate in other types of goal setting activities at those higher rates. In the next section, unusual patterns in the crosstabulation data are noted and conceptually significant points regarding the relationships discussed. In some cases, relationships that are not statistically significant are discussed where they offer insight into the research questions.

Relationships with "Goal Talk With Family." The variable "goal talk with family" was statistically significant in relation to all the goal setting activity variables except "goal talk with instructors." The crosstabulation tables arising from 4 relationships (with "goal setting now," "goal setting in courses," "goal talk with peers," and "goal achievement") followed the overall pattern of more students (15% to 20%) participating at often or regular rates in both goal setting activities. The data from "goal talk with family" by "prior goal setting" and "goal setting training" resulted in unusual data patterns in the cells. In both of these relationships, although there were fewer responses in the often or regular column and row, the majority of responses in those columns were notably in the highest cells (88%). This indicates that although fewer participants set prior goals or took goal setting training often or regularly, those who did so tended to talk with their families about goals at those high rates.

Relationships with "Goal Talk With Peers." The goal setting variable "goal talk with peers" had 5 statistically significant relationships with other goal setting activity variables: "goal setting now," "goal setting in courses," "goal talk with instructors," "goal talk with family," and "goal achievement." In examining the crosstabulation tables for possible sources of significance, the predominant pattern of often or regular activity in both variables again predominated in all but one relationship, "goal talk with instructor."

The frequency of goal discussion with peers is consistently related to the frequency of goal discussion with instructors. Most respondents indicated they "sometimes" talked about their goals with the instructor if they "sometimes" talked about their goals with peers. Although few students from the sample (24 of 143) talked to instructors often or regularly about their goals, those who did so talked to peers about goals often or regularly as well. At lower rates of goal talk with instructors, dramatically lower rates of goal talk with peers were also reported (24% when sometimes talking with peers; 3% when never or rarely talking with peers). This pattern also occurred in the relationship between talking about goals with the family and instructors although that relationship did not show statistical significance.

Relationships with "Goal Setting Now." The "goal setting now" variable was significantly associated with 5 other goal setting activity variables: "goal setting in courses," "goal setting training," "goal talk with peers," goal talk with family," and "goal achievement." In all these relationships, over 90% of the students who often or regularly set goals now (at the time of the study), were also involved in the other goal setting activities at often or regular rates. Of those who had participated in goal setting training at the high rate (often or regularly) 100% reported participating in goal setting now at those rates. The effect of training on subsequent goal setting activity reinforces the concept of goal setting as a skill that can be learned (Carnavale et al., 1990).

Relationships with "Goal Setting in Courses." "Goal setting in courses" was also statistically significant with 5 other goal setting activity variables: "goal setting now," "goal talk with instructors," "goal talk with peers," "goal talk with family," and "goal achievement." Again the pattern of correspondence between often or regular activity in both relationships predominates except at lower rates (82% to 85%) than with the "goal setting now" variable. The relationship between "goal setting in courses" and "goal talk with instructor" again differed. As occurred between goal talk with peers and instructors, the largest frequency occurred in the "sometimes" cells of both activities. These data may reflect the primary educational goal of the AU learners in the Program and reinforce the need to link goal setting training into that fundamental learner goal.

Relationships with "Goal Achievement." "Goal achievement" was statistically significant in relationship to 4 other goal setting activity variables: "goal setting now," "goal setting in courses," "goal talk with peers," and "goal talk with family." As in previous relationships, the frequencies in often or regular cells exceeded other cell frequencies (by 14 to 25%). Logically these data indicate that consistent participation in goal setting activities would result in goal achievement.

There was no statistically significant relationship between achievement and goal setting training. However, the crosstabulation table for this relationship was examined for further information because of the previously discussed findings that although 79% of students set goals often or regularly, only 55% achieved their goals at that rate. The crosstabulation data were revealing. Less than half (48%) of the students who never or rarely took goal setting training achieved their goals often or regularly; 61% of those who sometimes took goal setting training achieved their goals often or regularly. However, 81% of those who took goal setting training achieved their goals often or regularly. It appears that not only would goal setting training increase the amount of goal setting activity, it could also increase the effectiveness of that activity.

Relationships with "Goal Talk with Instructors." The variable "goal talk with instructors" was significant with only two other variables, both understandably in the classroom environment: "goal setting in courses" and "goal talk with peers." As described in previous relationships with the instructor goal talk variable, the predominant frequency was "sometimes." That pattern predominated in all relationships with instructor goal talk except for instructor goal talk by "prior goal setting" and "goal setting training." Individuals who tended to participate in these activities at often or regular rates reported talking with instructors about their goals at lower rates. This may indicate that these goal setters are more independent and seek less assistance.

Relationships with "Goal Setting Training." "Goal setting training" was statistically significant with only two variables, "goal setting now" and "goal talk with family." The crosstabulation tables had some interesting data for these relationships. Given the rural setting of the colleges and the general lack of attention to goal setting in our society, it is understandable that relatively few AU learners would have participated in goal setting training often or regularly. Accordingly, only 16 respondents indicated having done so. However, 100% of those respondents indicated that they now set goals often or regularly as opposed to 72% of those who "sometimes" took goal setting training and 78% of those who never or rarely took goal setting training. Similarly 88% of those who often or regularly took goal setting training now often or regularly talk about goals with their family as compared to 74% of those who "sometimes" took goal setting training and 52% of those who never or rarely took goal setting training. As indicated in previous relationships, goal setting training appears to have a positive impact on the extent of subsequent goal setting activities.

Summary. When the relationships among 8 goal setting activity variables were examined for statistical significance, 54% of the relationships were found to be

significant. These data suggest that discussing goals with one's family is a particularly potent way to develop and/or maintain goal setting abilities and motivation. Other activities that appear to be strongly associated with often or regular participation in goal setting activities included talking with peers about goals and goal setting in courses. It also appeared that talking to one's peers often or regularly about goals is a "prerequisite" to talking about goals with the instructor, an activity that otherwise occurred in surprisingly low frequencies. Goal setting now was also involved in 5 statistically significant relationships. With this variable the correspondence between high rates (often or regular) of this variable and others in a significant relationship was particularly high. Higher rates of goal achievement were related to "goal setting now," "goal setting in courses," "goal talk with peers," and "goal talk with family." These findings suggest that high participation in the indicated goal setting activities leads to high participation in other goal setting activities and, consequently, to goal achievement. Data on the goal setting training variable indicated that such training increases the frequency with which individuals participate in other key goal setting activities like goal talk with families and goal setting now.

Program Information

Student Satisfaction with AU Program Components

This section of the chapter sets the context for the second research question: "What is the relationship of student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Program?" Part III of the questionnaire focused on student satisfaction with various components of the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Program. Variables that reflected the literature and summarized each Program category were selected from the evaluation study for analysis in this research. The components evaluated were satisfaction with: support services, sponsoring agencies, instructional information, instructors, curriculum, and "other" (entry level

placement, preparation for further education or work, overall satisfaction). Students indicated their satisfaction by selecting from a 5 point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Undecided; 4=Agree; and 5=Strongly Agree). Findings are reported in Table 7. For ease of discussion, only the agree and strongly agree responses are reported in combined form in the table.

Satisfaction with Support Services. To explore student satisfaction with various College support services, 7 of 17 variables from this section of the questionnaire were selected for further analysis. Those variables measured participant satisfaction with: library, counseling on campus, personal counseling, student orientation, and helpfulness of instructors, administrators and financial aid staff. Table 6 outlines the frequency and percentage of participants who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about the adequacy or helpfulness of those College Support Services.

Students were moderately satisfied with the specified Lakeland College Support Services. Although the majority of learners (85%) agreed or strongly agreed that instructors helped them solve Program problems, less than 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed with satisfaction statements about the other support services. Adequacy of access to financial aid staff and personal counseling received the lowest agreement (56% and 44% respectively). These ratings indicate that almost half the AU learners may face Program, financial, and personal frustrations that undermine the effectiveness of their learning and, consequently, of their Program satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Instructional Information. To measure satisfaction with instruction, participants rated their agreement with variables that reflected elements of the Program delivery/structure. Learners were asked to indicate their agreement about being able to work at their own pace; make their own learning decisions; and become independent learners. They were also asked to respond to statements about receiving the

needed help in class and the adequacy of time compared to the workload.

Responses to this group of variables indicated that the Lakeland College AU Program was providing an environment conducive to independent learning for the majority of AU participants. Most participants (88%) agreed they could work at their own pace and that they liked deciding about their own learning (84%). However, there

Table 6

Satisfaction with Program Components*

	Agree/Strongly Agree	
	N	%
1. Student satisfaction with support services		
Instructors help resolve Program problems	120	85
Student orientation helpful	93	69
Library meets needs	88	63
Counseling adequate	81	58
Administration helps resolve Program problems	78	56
Access to financial aid staff adequate	76	56
Personal counseling adequate	60	44
2. Student satisfaction with instructional information		
Like making own learning decisions	122	84
Program helps me learn to learn	108	79
Can work at own pace	121	88
Help available in class	105	77
Appropriate workload	86	63
3. Student satisfaction with instructors		
Overall effective	127	91
Satisfactory academic feedback	106	76
Sensitive to needs & interests	105	76
Help with personal problems	97	69
4. Student satisfaction with curriculum		
Program appropriate to goals	119	85
Develops needed future abilities	115	83
Program grading satisfactory	14	82
Objectives support own goals	108	77
Course completion time adequate	85	61
5. Student satisfaction with "Other"		
Appropriate entry level	121	88
Program satisfactory	45	83
Adequate future preparation	110	81

* Columns reflect multiple responses

was less agreement about variables associated with facilitating work completion. Only 77% of respondents agreed that they received adequate in-class assistance. Even fewer individuals (63%) felt they had sufficient time for the course workload. Inadequate assistance and time could undermine the ability of learners to consistently make and carry out independent learning decisions, thereby undermining achievement of their planned course and Program goals.

Satisfaction with Instructors. Learner satisfaction with instructors was measured. Four variables were selected from 8 in the questionnaire to provide an overview of instructors in the areas the literature indicates are important to the success of reentry learners: instructional ability; sensitivity to learner needs and interests; adequate help with personal problems; and adequacy of feedback -- a key to successful goal setting (Locke & Latham, 1984).

Student agreement was the highest with the statement that, overall, instructors were effective. Agreement with the remaining statements was lower, ranging from 69% to 76%. The disparity between the high overall effectiveness and the lower ratings for specific instructional variables (reported above) could indicate that instructor efforts are appreciated by learners who recognize that classroom circumstances limit the assistance instructors can provide academically and personally. Or the disparity could indicate that learning is affected both individually and with instructor assistance. The lowest agreement was with the statement that instructors provided adequate assistance with personal problems. These data reflect the lack of satisfaction reported in an earlier section for counseling assistance with personal problems. The findings suggest students expect instructors to provide assistance with nonacademic personal problems.

Satisfaction with Curriculum. Items selected to indicate student satisfaction with the curriculum focused on factors related to student goals: the curriculum being

appropriate to student goals; the curriculum developing needed future abilities; adequate grading in the Program; the objectives supporting student goals; and the curriculum allowing adequate time for completing the Program. Most students (85%) agreed that the curriculum was appropriate to their goals and helped develop needed future abilities (83%). However, agreement dropped by over 20% for the variable about adequate time being available for Program completion.

Satisfaction with "Other" Program Factors. A final section of the questionnaire assessed agreement with a variety of Program factors that would affect Program satisfaction and goal achievement. These factors were initial placement, appropriate preparation to meet future educational or career goals, and overall satisfaction with the Program. The majority of participants (over 80%) agreed or strongly agreed with these 3 statements, especially with a factor critical to learner success: being placed at the appropriate entry level. This agreement suggests that, overall, learners were satisfied with their experience in the AU program at Lakeland College.

Summary. Learners indicated inconsistent agreement about the adequacy of various Lakeland College AU program components. In support services, highest participant satisfaction was with instructors and the lowest was with personal counseling. Responses indicated that overall AU instruction encouraged independent learning but that insufficient feedback and time may have limited autonomy and achievement. Most learners agreed that instructors were effective, but reported that other instructional factors (like help with personal problems and instructor sensitivity to student needs and interests) were less satisfactory. The curriculum was reported as supportive of current and future student goals but objectives, feedback and completion time received lower ratings. Students indicated that a critical factor, initial placement, was one of the most satisfying factors in a Program which, overall, was satisfying.

Relationship of Goals and Goal Setting Activities to Program Satisfaction

This section of Chapter 4 focuses on the second research question: "What is the relationship of student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Program?" To explore the relationship between student goal setting experience and Program satisfaction, the 8 goal setting activity variables were crosstabulated by the 24 Program component variables then reviewed for conceptual and statistical significance. The goal setting activity variables are reviewed below and the Program component variables are outlined in Table 7.

- prior goal setting
- goal setting now
- goal setting in courses
- goal talk with instructors
- goal setting training
- goal talk with peers
- goal talk with family
- goal achievement

For both groups of variables, respondents selected from a 5 - point Likert scale. Both the goal setting activity and Program component variables were collapsed to 3 - point Likert scales for the crosstabulation analysis (Goal setting activities: 1=never & rarely, 2=sometimes, 3=often & regularly; Program components: 1=strongly disagree & disagree, 2=undecided, 3=agree or strongly agree). Therefore the final analysis involved 3 x 3 tables. The degree of relationship or chi-square between and among the goal setting activities and Program component variables are first represented in Table 7 by significance: NS (not significant) or an asterisk for a statistically significant relationship (having a probability level $\leq .05$) to show the overall pattern.

Table 7

Statistical Significance of Program Satisfaction Variables with Goal Setting Activities

	Goal Setting Variables							
Program Variables	GS= Before	GS Now	GS Crse	by GT Instr	GS Train	GT Peers	GT Family	Goal Achieve
Support Services								
Library meets needs	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	*	NS	NS
Counseling adequate	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Personal counseling adequate	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Student orientation helpful	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
College administration helps resolve Program problems	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Access to financial aid staff adequate	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	*	NS	*
Instructors help resolve Program problems	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	*	NS	*
Instructional Information								
Appropriate workload	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Can work at own pace	NS	*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Help available in class	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Program helps me learn to learn	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	NS	NS
Like making own learn decisions	NS	*	*	*	NS	*	NS	NS
Instructors								
Overall effective	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	NS
Sensitive to needs & interests	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	*	NS
Help with personal problems	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	NS	NS
Satisfactory academic feedback	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Curriculum								
Program appropriate to goals	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Develops needed future abilities	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Objectives support own goals	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Course completion time adequate	*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Program grading satisfactory	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
"Other"								
Appropriate entry level	NS	*	*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Adequate future preparation	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	NS
Program satisfactory	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	*	NS	NS

= GS=goal setting; GT=goal talk; Crse=course

Then, because crosstabulation does not indicate the source of significance, patterns of relationship among Program components and goal setting activities were

examined for further understanding of conceptual significance. Data regarding that examination are presented in Table 8 which focuses on analyzing the overall, conceptual patterns of those relationships.

Table 8 is organized in 4 sections. The first section presents the patterns of significant relationships in the overall Program components. Then the number of statistically significant relationships for Program component variables is listed in section 2. Section 3 of Table 8 notes the number of significant relationships for goal setting activity variables. In the final section, the effect of the Program component variables on goal setting activity variables is presented. There the number of statistically significant relationships when goal setting activity variables were crosstabulated by each other and by Program component variables are compared and discussed.

Overview of Significant Relationships.

Table 7 provides further understanding of the relationship of student goal setting to Program satisfaction by examining the crosstabulation of goal setting activity (8 variables) and Program satisfaction variables (24 variables). The table illustrates that a relatively small proportion of the relationships (24 of 192 or 12%) among Program component and goal setting activity variables were statistically significant or acted in some dependent manner.

Relationships within Program Components

Section 1 of Table 8 shows that, of the 5 Program components, the highest percentage of significant relationships occurred within the "Other" component (21%) and the next highest in "Support Services." The "Curriculum" component, however, interacted significantly with only 1 goal setting activity variable. The number of statistically significant relationships for each program component variable are outlined next in section 2 of Table 8.

Table 8

General Patterns of Significant Relationships

1. Significant Relationships per Program Component

Program Components	Possible Relationships N	Significant Relationships N	%
"Other"	24	5	21
Support Services	56	8	16
Instructors	32	4	13
Instructional Information	40	5	12
Curriculum	40	1	3
	192	23	

2. Statistically Significant Relationships per Program Component Variable

Program Component Variables	Significant Relationships (N)
Like making own learning decisions	4
Access to financial aid staff adequate	3
Instructors help solve Program problems	3
Library meets need	2
Instructors sensitive to needs & interests	2
Appropriate entry level	2
Program satisfactory	2
Program helps me learn to learn	1
Instructors overall effective	1
Instructors help with personal problems	1
Course completion time adequate	1
Adequate future preparation	1

3. Statistically Significant Relationships per Goal Setting Activity Variable

Goal Setting Activity Variables	Significant Relationships with Program Components (N)
Peer goal talk	8
Goal talk in courses	5
Goal set now	3
Instructor goal talk	3
Achieve goals	2
Prior goal setting	1
Goal setting training	1
Family goal talk	1

4. Number of Significant Relationships per Goal Setting Activity

Goal setting Activity	Statistically significant relationships by GS Variables* (N)	Program Variables (N)
Peer goal talk	5	8
Goal talk in courses	5	5
Goal set now	5	3
Instructor goal talk	2	3
Achieve goals	4	2
Prior goal setting	1	1
Goal setting training	2	1
Family goal talk	6	1

*GS= Goal Setting

Relationships with "Instructional Information" Program Variable: "Like Making Own Learning Decisions." According to section 2 of Table 8, one "Instructional Information" variable was particularly influential (or influenced) by goal setting activities. "Like making own learning decisions" was associated significantly with 4 goal setting activity variables. The crosstabulation tables consistently show that students who reported involvement in goal setting activities at high (often or regular) rates also agreed that they liked making their own learning decisions. The literature indicates that a willingness to learn new skills and information is a key requirement in a changing society such as ours (Carnevale et al., 1990; Cross, 1981; Porter, 1990). It also suggests that the goal of adult education is to create independent learners (Brookfield, 1986). If goal setting somehow influences the tendency, desire, or ability to be an independent learner, then more attention should be paid to how that influence occurs.

Relationships with "Other" Program Variables: "Appropriate Entry Level" and "Program Satisfactory." The "Other" Program component variables were: "appropriate entry level"; "adequate future preparation"; and "Program satisfactory." Two of those were interdependent with goal setting activity variables. "Appropriate entry level" was associated significantly with the goal setting variables "goal setting now" and "goal setting in courses." The crosstabulation tables for these relations show that the majority of learners who reported regular goal setting activity, also reported agreement with "Other" Program satisfaction statements.

Both Program component variables, "appropriate entry level" and "Program satisfactory," are important in the reentry process. Being placed at the appropriate level when entering a Program makes it possible for the learner to successfully do the work which leads to satisfaction with the Program. That goal setting is associated with variables that are central to the quality of a learner's experience reinforces the call emerging in the literature for more attention to adult learner goals and goal setting (Fagan, 1991; Wicker et al., 1991).

Relationships with "Support Services" Variables: Access to Financial Aid Staff Adequate" & "Instructors Help Solve Program Problems." The most striking pattern in the "Support Services" Program component involved two Program variables, "access to financial aid staff adequate" and "instructors help solve problems." Each of these variables was significantly influenced by the same 3 goal setting activity variables: "goal setting in courses," "goal talk with peers," and "goal achievement."

The 2 significant Support Service Program variables involved adequate access to financial staff and adequate instructor help in resolving problems. Both Program variables were significantly related to the same 3 goal setting activity variables: "goal setting in courses," "goal talk with peers," and "goal achievement." In reviewing the crosstabulation tables of these relationships, it appeared that students who set goals in courses and talked with peers about goals regularly had the strongest agreement with the statement that access to financial staff was adequate. That pattern also occurred, but with less frequency, in the crosstabulation data regarding goal achievement.

The second significant Support Services Program variable in relation to goal setting activities is "instructors help solve Program problems." Crosstabulation data show that learner responses to this Program variable have a pattern similar to those for accessing financial aid staff (often or regularly participate in goal setting activities and agree or strongly agree with the Program component satisfaction statement). Conceptually, this relationship is understandable. Individuals who set goals will have a clearer understanding of barriers to achieving those goals. Therefore, they would be able to more effectively approach their key resource, an instructor, for assistance. As the literature indicates, individuals with clear goals are also more motivated to overcome problems (Fagan, 1991).

Goal Setting Activity Variables.

The remaining 2 sections of Table 8 focus on the goal setting activity variables in relation to the Program component variables and to each other. First the number of significant relationships for each goal setting activity variable in relation to the Program component variables is presented. The goal setting activity variables that were most involved in dependent relationships with Program component variables were "peer goal talk" (8) and "goal talk in courses" (5).

When the goal setting activity variables were crosstabulated by each other (last section in Table 4) "family goal talk" was associated with the largest number of other goal setting activity variables (6). Yet that goal setting variable only interacted significantly with 1 Program component variable, as illustrated in sections 3 and 4 of Table 8. Instead, "peer goal talk" emerged as the goal setting activity that influenced the most Program component variables (8) when these goal setting activities were explored with the Program components. "Goal setting in courses" was the next highest goal setting variable with 5 significant relationships, the same as when it was crosstabulated with the other goal setting variables. Again, the crosstabulation tables show a predominance of responses in the cell with both high (often or regular) goal setting activity cell and agree or strong Program variable agreement.

According to the significant relationships involving goal setting activity variables, the family may be a particularly potent agent for an individual developing or maintaining goal setting skills. However, in the classroom, other factors build on the goal setting base to more strongly influence Program satisfaction. This may indicate two types of support for the AU learners. Prior to enrolling or with regard to nonacademic goals or goal setting itself, the family may be a key resource in a person's life. However, in an academic setting the educational environment appears to be a powerful influence, possibly supplanting family influence.

For institutions and for the learners themselves, this alternative pattern of

influence can be advantageous. It would be more difficult for the College to extend its influence to the family in attempting to reinforce or teach goal setting skills to its learners. Influencing the family may not be as important when the key objective of goal setting is to increase effectiveness in the classroom where, according to the findings, focusing goal setting on courses and on discussions with peers may be most effective. It seems likely that, given the strong influence of the family on goal setting in general, any goal setting training an individual gains at the College may be transferred to and reinforced in the family setting.

Summary. This section of Chapter 4 focused on the second research question, "What is the relationship of student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland AU Program?" Although the number of statistically significant relationships was limited, data arising from crosstabulation of goal setting activity and Program component variables suggested some positive and possible relationships.

Generally, data in the crosstabulation tables indicated that individuals who participated in goal setting activities often or regularly, expressed higher levels of agreement (agree or strongly) with statements of satisfaction about Program components. More specifically, the findings indicated that several components of Program satisfaction (appropriate placement at entry; overall Program satisfaction; access to financial aid staff; instructor help with resolving Program problems; and liking to make own learning decisions) are significantly related to several goal setting activities. The goal setting activities that were most consistently related to Program satisfaction were goal talk with peers and goal setting in courses. Although these Program component variables represented a small proportion of those evaluated, according to the literature, they include some of the key factors in a successful reentry process. Therefore, the interaction of the goal setting activity and Program component variables reinforces the need for research into goal setting with adult learners and the introduction of goal setting skill training into the AU Program at Lakeland College and into programs with similar learners.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research on ABE/AU learners indicates that Program satisfaction is synonymous with the degree to which students are able to utilize Program resources to accomplish their educational, career, and personal objectives. Accomplishment in an educational setting is particularly important for this learner group. The limiting effects of past frustration can be replaced with the confidence and credentials needed to continue learning in a society where lifelong learning is becoming a necessity rather than a luxury.

Although the literature supports the need for accelerated rates of adult education, the literature also indicates researchers and practitioners are paying limited attention to strategies that could assist reentry adults in educational settings. Simultaneously, research supports goal setting as a method shown to increase adult performance in a variety of settings. This study sought to explore the goal setting experiences of AU learners at Lakeland College and to explore the relationship of that experience with Program satisfaction. It is hoped the findings will assist learners, instructors and Program administrators incorporate formal goal setting activities into the AU experience. It is also hoped the findings will be of value to researchers and practitioners in the field who are gathering knowledge to enhance the learning process for the reentry adults.

This final chapter presents a summary of the study, including its purpose, research methodology, and findings. Then conclusions arising from the findings are provided. Finally recommendations based on those conclusions are offered for policy, Program, and research levels.

Summary of the Study

This study was drawn out of a larger program evaluation study regarding the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Program. The major purpose of this study was to

explore the relationship between student goal setting and student satisfaction with the Academic Upgrading Program. Two research questions guided this study. The first question sought information on student goal setting experiences prior to and during attendance in the Academic Upgrading Program at Lakeland College. The second question explored the relationship between student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland Academic Upgrading Program.

Various data gathering approaches were used in that study including a 10 page questionnaire for students from which the data in this study were drawn. The questionnaire was organized into 3 sections and portions of each section were used for these analyses. The first section provided background data on the participants; the second section focused on student goal setting experiences; the third gathered data on student satisfaction with the AU Program. The instrument was developed in consultation with an evaluation planning committee from Lakeland College and pilot tested with the student members of that committee.

The sample for the study included all 189 Academic Upgrading students attending Lakeland College. The questionnaires were delivered to each of the 5 Lakeland College campuses and administered simultaneously by trained college support staff at each site. Because a term had ended at one large campus, only 143 questionnaires were completed for a return rate of 76%.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSX) program was used for data analysis. Findings were reported as descriptive data using frequencies. In addition crosstabulation analysis was conducted to explore relationships among several variables. Those findings were discussed both conceptually and statistically.

Review of Findings

Findings from this study were presented according to background characteristics of the respondents and according to the two research questions. The findings are summarized in the following section.

Description of the Respondents. The respondents in this study were predominantly female. An equal portion of participants were single or married, with half that number divorced or separated. Most of the students had children and most parents stayed home when their children were ill. The majority of learners had completed some high school education and most had been under-employed prior to entering the AU Program. Over half learned about the Program from a personal contact.

Research Question 1: What were the goal setting experiences of students prior to and during the AU Program at Lakeland College? To begin exploring student goals, participants were asked to: identify their educational, career, and personal goals; indicate whether they changed those goals; select reasons for changing those goals if they had done so. According to the responses, the major student educational goals were to qualify for further education or training. Career goals were varied but reflected the need for ongoing studies. Most respondents set personal goals as a result of attending the AU Program. Over a quarter of students changed their goals during the Program; personal goals were changed at the highest rate. The primary reason for changing goals was "career decision making."

Next, student goal setting activities were explored. Students were asked to indicate their participation in 8 goal setting activities involving setting goals prior to and after enrollment, goal setting in courses, taking goal setting training, discussing goals (with instructors, peers, or family members) and achieving goals. Participation was indicated by selecting from a 5-point Likert scale: 0=never; 1=rarely; 2=sometimes;

3=often; 4=regularly. Responses were reported in collapsed form (never & rarely; sometimes; often & regularly).

Data indicated that participation in the AU Program dramatically increased goal setting activities for some students. Those who set goals often or regularly increased from 25% prior to enrollment, to 79% after enrollment. Simultaneously, students indicated that while most of them set goals often or regularly, only half achieved their goals often or regularly. That inconsistency may be due to the lack of training in setting goals, for two thirds of the respondents reported they had never or rarely participated in goal setting training. Instructors are key elements in the AU learning setting (Fagan, 1991; Grotelueschen et al., 1976; Martin, 1979; Mezirow et al., 1975) yet students tended to discuss their goals with peers and family members rather than with instructors.

Students were then asked to rate their satisfaction with College Support Services in helping them identify, plan and work toward their goals. Although they did not tend to discuss their goals with instructors, learners were most satisfied with instructors and the College calendar or courses in helping them work toward their goals. Learners were less satisfied with goal-related assistance from sponsors and counselors. These are 2 areas in which AU/ABE learners can experience barriers to successful reentry so the possible dissatisfaction of 30% to 35% of the learners merits attention.

The impact of prior goal setting experiences on current goal setting experiences was explored through crosstabulation analysis. Although there were no statistically significant relationships, conceptual analysis of the crosstabulation tables indicated that participants who set goals often or regularly (as opposed to never/rarely, or sometimes) were less likely to change their goals.

To explore student goal setting experiences further, the 8 goal setting activity variables were crosstabulated by each other. Overall, data in the crosstabulation tables indicated that individuals who participated in one goal setting activity at a regular or often rate tended to participate in other goal setting activities at those higher frequencies.

Over half of the resulting relationships were statistically significant. The variables that were involved in the most dependent relationships included talking about goals with family and peers, setting goals now, and setting goals in courses. Talking with the family about goals seemed particularly effective. In addition, responses indicated that students tended not to talk about their goals to instructors if they did not also talk about them to their peers. Therefore, these data suggest that the family and peers are significant influences in goal setting. However, setting goals did not necessarily mean that the goals would be achieved. Both goal setting training and talking with instructors may be ways to increase the effectiveness of student goal setting.

Question 2: What is the relationship of student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland AU Program? The second research question focused on student Program satisfaction and that satisfaction in relation to goal setting experiences. To explore Program satisfaction, students were asked to indicate their agreement with statements about 5 components of the AU Program: support services, instructional information, instructors, curriculum, and "other" (entry level placement, future preparation for further education or work; overall Program satisfaction). Findings showed that students had varying degrees of satisfaction with the specified Program components. With regard to College support services, instructors and calendars/courses were the most satisfying and personal counseling was the least satisfying. (The lower rate of satisfaction with personal counseling may, however, have been affected by ambiguity of the variable). Responses regarding instructional information indicated that satisfaction was high with the opportunity to make independent learning decisions, work at one's own pace and learn how to learn. However, there was less agreement that in-class assistance was adequate and that time to complete the course workload was adequate.

The next Program component considered was the instructors themselves. Of all

the variables explored in Program component satisfaction, overall instructor effectiveness received the strongest endorsement (91% selecting agree or strongly agree). Nevertheless, agreement dropped by 15 - 22% regarding the adequacy of feedback and instructor assistance with personal problems (respectively) suggesting that learners acknowledged that instructors attempted to but could not meet the variety of academic and nonacademic learner needs.

The Program curriculum was then considered. Students were most satisfied with 3 of the 5 curriculum component variables: appropriateness of the curriculum to their goals, preparation for future goals, and Program grading procedures. However, there was less agreement that course objectives supported learner goals and even less that time for course completion was adequate.

The 3 variables in the final "other" Program category had strong consensus: being placed at the appropriate entry level, overall Program satisfaction, and preparation for future career or educational goals. Being placed at the appropriate entry level, an important factor in subsequent student success and goal achievement, was particularly satisfactory for these learners (88%).

Further crosstabulation analysis of Program satisfaction by the goal setting activity variables was conducted to provide more data to answer the second research question: "What is the relationship of student goal setting experiences to student satisfaction with the Lakeland AU Program?" Only 12% of the relationships were significant, predominantly in the "other" and "support services" Program components. The data indicated that several important aspects of the AU learning experience were related to goal setting activities: "appropriate entry level," "overall Program satisfactory," "access to financial aid staff," "instructors help resolve problems," and "like making own learning decisions."

The goal setting activity variables that were associated most strongly with Program satisfaction were from the classroom: "peer goal talk" and "goal talk in

courses." Talking with family about goals was of little significance in this crosstabulation. Overall the data indicated that those who participated in goal setting activities regularly tended to find the Program satisfactory. The data also suggested that goal setting training for students should focus on the classroom elements of discussing goals with peers and setting goals for course work. However, the positive influence of the family on goal setting itself should also be advantageous to students. Further research needs to be conducted into goal setting with adult learners. However, because of the interdependence of goal setting activity and Program satisfaction variables, skill development in goal setting should be implemented on a Program level.

Conclusions

This section presents conclusions arising out of the literature review and the findings. The conclusions are organized according to the methodology, background information and the two research questions. Discussion in the conclusions is supported by reference to the literature. Recommendations are drawn from the conclusions.

1. Participants in the Lakeland College AU Program are predominantly mature adults whose background and current responsibilities add to the inherent pressures of academic reentry, and shape participant goals.

Like any adults continuing their studies, the Lakeland College AU learners bring with them roles and responsibilities they must coordinate with academic responsibilities. For most participants those responsibilities are exacerbated by dependent children. Almost half of the parents indicated they stay home when those children are ill. The findings from this study reflect the accumulated stresses and these pressures and the need for corresponding student support. In both the goal setting and Program satisfaction sections, students consistently reported low rates of satisfaction with personal counseling services and the time available for completing course work.

The findings also indicated that the majority of participants had been under-employed prior to returning to school, a situation the literature indicates is synonymous

with under-education (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1985; Delker, 1984; MacKeracher & DeCoito, 1984; Seppanen, 1991). Thus, many Lakeland College AU learners probably brought with them the combined negative psychosocial and economic consequences of having dropped out of school and being unemployed, under-employed, and/or on some sort of social assistance. Throughout the literature about ABE/AU learners, researchers emphasize the extent and impact of low self esteem on this student group (DeCoito & MacKeracher, 1984; Fisher & Martin, 1989; Mezirow et al., 1975; Wilson, 1979).

The limiting socioeconomic circumstances these learners reported are reflected in their pragmatic and aspiring goals. Respondents indicated their primary role for enrollment was to achieve the credentials for career and educational advancement. The goal oriented, practical orientation of adult learners is emphasized throughout the literature and, apparently, shared by the Lakeland College AU learners (Brookfield, 1986; Cross, 1981; Houle, 1961; Knowles, 1980; Knox, 1986).

2. Participants tend to change educational, career, and personal goals during the Program because of career information and/or success.

According to the findings, between 25 to 50% of the AU learners experienced changes in their goals during the Program. Primary reasons for these changes were "career decision making" and "success." A small percentage of AU learners changed their goals due to academic problems, so it appears that the Program provides students with the information and/or self confidence to set more informed and, probably, more realistic goals. Also, students may set more aspiring goals as a result of academic achievement or increased self confidence. This suggests Lakeland College AU students are gaining more than educational and vocational benefits from Program participation, as the literature indicates happens with reentry programs (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Cross, 1981; Martin, 1987; Mezirow et al., 1975).

As a result of those gains, students change their goals during the Program. That

process may involve some disruption and frustration. However, findings indicate that students who regularly set goals prior to enrollment were less likely to change their goals once enrolled. Therefore, the data suggest that the information and experience acquired during the Program may not be the primary cause of goal change. Rather, the principal cause may be inappropriate goals resulting from ineffective or nonexistent goal setting.

3. Goal setting training and experience are important factors in stabilizing goals and in goal achievement.

Only 11% of Program participants had taken formal training in setting goals. Also, although three quarters of participants set goals often or regularly once in the Program, only half the population reported achieving their goals often or regularly. Therefore, the discrepancy between goal setting and goal achievement frequencies could be associated with the minimal experience with training in setting goals. Furthermore, crosstabulation data indicated that goal achievement is more consistent if a student had participated in regular goal setting training. Apparently, although goal setting is a simple concept (Carnevale, Gainer & Meltzer, 1990), the process of setting consistently effective goals may require formal training to ensure that key elements such as goals being realistic, specific, and measurable are adequately incorporated (Locke & Latham, 1984).

4. The AU student's experience is strongly and positively affected by the instructor.

Students consistently reported high satisfaction with instructors in the Program; instructor variables were significantly related with goal setting and Program satisfaction variables. Yet only those students who set goals regularly reported discussing their goals with instructors. And only 61% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that instructors provided adequate help with personal problems. Simultaneously, 91% of students agreed or strongly agreed that, overall, instructors were effective. The discrepancy between learner satisfaction with instructor assistance and

overall satisfaction with instructors suggests that students recognize the limitations instructors face in the AU classroom -- limitations like inadequate resources, shortage of time, lack of support services like personal counselors to reduce the need for instructors to deal with nonacademic student concerns. These data suggest, as does the literature, that instructors are of central importance to student success and satisfaction with their Program experience (Fagan, 1991; Grotelueschen et al., 1976; Martin, 1979).

5. The strongest relationships among goal setting variables and Program satisfaction involve appropriate placement into the Program, satisfaction with support from financial aid staff and instructors, and liking to make independent learning decisions.

Understandably, being placed at an appropriate level upon entering a Program would be related to subsequent goal achievement and academic success. According to student responses, Lakeland College was doing well at placing learners at appropriate levels. Also, it appeared that regular goal setting was related to satisfaction with two other key elements of the reentry learning experience: access to financial aid staff and instructor support in solving Program problems. It is important to note that learners in general reported being satisfied with instructors helping them resolve Program problems. However, learners were less satisfied with access to financial aid staff when that Program variable was considered by itself. Yet when that variable was crosstabulated with goal setting activity variables, regular goal setters tended to be satisfied with access to financial aid staff. Goal setting activities were also associated with students liking to make independent learning decisions, an important aspect of adult education in general.

6. In the goal setting process, talking with family members about goals has the most influence on the other types of goal setting activities.

The findings suggest that, in general, individuals who participated regularly in one type of goal setting activity also participated in other goal setting activities at that rate. However, it appears the family plays an important role in goal setting. That importance

may be based on several factors. Individuals may be motivated to do well because they want their family to be proud of them or, in the case of students with children, because they want to be positive role models. Another factor may be that family support provides the motivation and reinforcement to set and attain goals. Also, in a setting with limited opportunities for formal training in goal setting, family members may be a source of role modelling and informal instruction for goal setting skills.

7. The goal setting activities most consistently associated with Program satisfaction are talking with peers about goals and setting goals regarding courses.

The focus shifts from the family when goal setting is linked with Program satisfaction. There talking with peers about goals and setting goals in the classroom predominate in dependent relationships. Again the immediate environment appears to play an important role in determining the influencing activities. As individuals spend a substantial part of their day in the classroom environment, that setting could be used as an important source of goal setting motivation and reinforcement.

Recommendations

AU learners are a unique group in a community college setting. They come to the educational setting with a history of limited academic success and/or satisfaction. That history, if not considered or addressed, will be an additional limitation to the academic success of the reentry learner. The findings from this study indicated the College (and other institutions that provide AU programs) are powerfully situated to utilize program components that help these learners increase their likelihood of success in that and subsequent programs.

The recommendations from this study are based on the conclusions and supported by findings from the literature review and student responses. Recommendations are directed to the College and offered at the policy, Program and research levels.

1. **The College should introduce a comprehensive goal setting program for AU learners and ensure that appropriate support staff can assist students with goal identification and achievement.**

Because goal setting has been used so effectively to enhance adult success in other settings, educational providers for reentry adults should explore the potential benefits of applying this strategy to the adult learning environment. That application could be particularly valuable in an environment where learners who have experienced limited educational success are attempting to regain their confidence and skill. It is not enough to ask students to identify a goal upon entry to a Program. That goal may be indefinite or unrealistic. Many learners lack the knowledge to establish realistic goals and to evaluate the likelihood of achieving their academic or career goals. Professionals who have that information can be of critical assistance.

For consistent and reinforced application of goal setting strategies in the educational setting, support is required at the policy level. That support should include the development of a goal setting program specifically adapted to reentry learners. The support should also involve comprehensive training for those who will work with the learners to help them acquire and implement goal setting skills. At the senior administration level, the resources (i.e., time, personnel, management endorsement) needed for proper implementation and maintenance of such a program need to be carefully safeguarded. Because realistic goal setting will be a new skill for most AU learners, the skill will need to be reinforced and reviewed regularly until individuals experience enough successes to incorporate the process as an ongoing strategy.

2. **At the Program level, the College should assist learners to set and work toward realistic goals.**

Reentry learners are required to identify a goal upon beginning an AU Program but the Lakeland study indicates that numerous students consequently change their educational, career, and personal goals. To minimize the frustration and additional sense

of failure that ineffective setting and changing of goals could involve for these learners, educational institutions need to provide the resources and support to assist AU learners identify, work toward, and achieve realistic goals.

To set realistic goals, learners need to understand the reentry learning experience, i.e., what it is like to return to school, what barriers will have to be overcome, what skills should be learned, what is realistic to expect as progress; how to deal with setbacks. Institutions need to make appropriate, skilled resource people available (counselors, instructors) to support learners in identifying and achieving their career and Program goals so that unrealistic expectations do not result in another learning experience that culminates in disappointment and drop out (Baldwin, 1991; Garrison, 1985). To allocate resources most effectively, the College should assess student goal setting skills upon entry. Then the degree of formal assistance with goal setting can be adapted according to individual students, with less experienced goal setters being provided with more intensive skill development and support than those students who already appear to be proficient goal setters.

The classroom is the core of the student's successful educational experience. The support of competent and empathic instructors is critical. Not only are instructors important role models, problem solvers, and learning "guides," they also provide the feedback that is critical to successful goal achievement. However, the findings indicate that peer support with goal setting and goal setting in courses are also associated with important factors in Program satisfaction. Students should be coached on how to help fellow students set and achieve goals. Reflecting both the findings and the pragmatic nature of adults, that coaching should involve student course work.

Data from this study indicated another resource participants drew on for reinforcement of their goals: family members. Goal setting workshops should, therefore, be open to family members. The College would also benefit from including another group in its goal setting workshops -- potential learners. Findings from the AU

evaluation indicate that individuals who set goals on a regular basis prior to entering the Program consistently had higher goal setting rates once enrolled in the Program. Therefore, the College could make its goal setting training available to prospective students.

3. The College should introduce specific academic, career, and personal skill building strategies for AU learners throughout the Program.

The findings indicate that AU participants have enrolled to gain the credentials or skills to go on to higher education or career levels. However, the learner profile also indicates these learners had been unemployed or under-employed, financially disadvantaged, and lacking a level of education considered basic in our society. To expect these learners to easily reenter a learning setting without some assistance to build skills or adjust to the demanding atmosphere of a classroom is unrealistic and likely to result in another dropout experience for some learners. Anderson & Darkenwald report that AU learners drop out 4 times as often as other adult learners (in Martin, 1990).

Workshops should be provided to assist these learners be successful in an academic and/or vocational setting. Those workshops could include study, writing, and note taking skills. Relevant career related workshops would be job search skills, resume writing, career decision making, values clarification, and goal setting. Personal development would be very beneficial, i.e., workshops to increase self esteem and assertiveness. In this case, the majority of learners are busy parents. It is likely that mini workshops on "parenting under pressure" during lunch hours would be well attended and highly appreciated.

4. The College should review and adjust specific Program components that add further pressure to the returning AU learner.

According to this study, particular Program components that could interfere with successful reentry and Program completion are: lack of access to emergency childcare,

inadequate counseling for personal problems, limited access to financial aid staff, and inadequate time for course completion. In addition to ensuring that sufficient internal resources are made available to help learners deal with situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers, institutions need to work with sponsors and funding bodies to ensure that adequate financial support and course completion time are available for these learners .

5. Further research is required into goal setting and AU learners.

The information obtained through this study suggests that goal setting would be a beneficial strategy to incorporate into the AU classroom. However many questions remain to be answered. The terms "goal" and "goal setting" were not defined to learners. Rather their own perceptions shaped their responses. Lakeland College could initiate a pilot project with a group of AU learners to whom standardized definitions were given and formal training provided. That project could be evaluated for the impact of the training on student achievement and satisfaction. Further research could then be conducted into learner characteristics that could impact the rate of goal setting and attainment. Personality, ability, and motivation factors are only a few personal variables to be considered. Other variables could be studied like family background, financial status, educational experiences, employment history, and problem solving strategies.

Mezirow et al. (1975) included financial problems as one of the factors that exacerbate other problems reentry learners face. The finding that satisfactory access to financial aid staff was not independent of goal setting is additional incentive to conduct research on goal setting as a motivational strategy for this group of adult learners. Research is needed to determine the extent to which other variables could influence this relationship.

Concluding Comments

Because of economic pressures, governments and educational institutions will need to pay closer attention to learners who have been unsuccessful in traditional educational routes. Since existing upgrading programs are attracting or retaining only a small percentage of those who need further education, alternative strategies to attract this learner group will hopefully be sought.

Goal setting has proven to be a consistently powerful motivational strategy that can increase student success if implemented effectively. A critical factor will be institutional commitment to developing goal setting programs, training staff and students in those strategies, and integrating those strategies into the AU/ABE program. Tough (1988) describes the benefits of institutional support of learner goals:

> I feel there are two types of support services that we should be offering. One is helping learners set their goals....We could clarify just why they want to take certain courses, what kind of competency or knowledge they want to gain, and what they are going to do with their new learning. By helping them get a broader, long-term vision of their goals, they would make better choices in the courses, projects, and assignments they undertake. Then they may feel just that much more motivated to go through the program and complete it" (in Brindley, 1988, p. 8).

This study sought to explore the association between goal setting practices of AU students and their satisfaction with the Program. Most Lakeland College AU students had not been trained in goal setting so this study reflects the informal skills they developed and the support they may have received from equally untrained college personnel and peers. The results of this study can encourage institutions to provide systematic training in these skills. If learners are appropriately trained to utilize Program resources to meet their goals, the results should be as dramatic as they have been in numerous other cases of well-applied goal setting. With that kind of increase in achievement, both learners and institutions would experience ongoing and positive rewards.

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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

LAKELAND COLLEGE ACADEMIC UPGRADING

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experiences with the Academic Upgrading Program at Lakeland College. Because this information is confidential, please do not sign your name anywhere. Your responses will in no way affect your grades in the Program.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

1 2 3 4 5

Part I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION. This section requests information about your academic and personal situation. (check or fill in the appropriate response)

1. Your age category: 06
   (1)____17 - 20 (3)____26 - 30 (5)____ 41 - 50
   (2)____21 - 25 (4)____31 - 40 (6)____over 50 years

2. Gender: (1)____ female (2) ____ male 07

3. Marital status: 08
   (1)____single (3)____separated/divorced
   (2)____married/common law (4)____other (specify)_____

4. Number of children under 12 years of age living with you : 09
   (1)____does not apply (3)____two
   (2)____one (4)____three or more

5. Child care arrangements during your program: 10,11
   (1)____does not apply (4)____babysitting
   (2)____spouse (5)____after school care
   (3)____relative (6)____daycare
   (7)____other (specify)_____

6. Child care arrangements when children are sick: 12,13
   (1)____does not apply (4)____babysitting
   (2)____spouse (5)____daycare
   (3)____relative (6)____I stay home from classes
   (7)____other (specify)_____

7. Highest grade of formal education completed before attending any Academic Upgrading Program: 14
   (1)____ less than grade 9 (4)____ grade 11
   (2)____ grade 9 (5)____ grade 12
   (3)____ grade 10 (6)____ other (specify) _____

8. Please check your status before your enrollment in Lakeland. 15,16
   (1)____employed part-time (5)____enrolled in employment training
   (2)____employed full-time (6)____at home
   (3)____unemployed (7)____on social assistance
   (4)____self-employed (8)____other (specify)_____

9. How did you hear about the Academic Upgrading Program at Lakeland College? (check all that apply)

(1)____newspaper (4)____radio (6)____friend/relative
(2)____brochure/flyer (5)____teacher (7)____former student
(3)____employment counselor (8)____other (specify)_____

17-24

10. Campus/Centre presently attending:

(1)____ Fort Kent (3)____ Vegreville (5)____ Wainwright
(2)____ Lloydminster (4)____ Vermilion

25

11. If you are at the Fort Kent Campus, how long did you spend in the Alberta Vocational Centre Level 300 Program?

(1)____none (3)____3 to 6 months
(2)____1 to 3 months (4)____6 months to 1 year
(5)____more than 1 year

26

12. Total time in Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Programto date:

(1)____3 months or less (4)____1 to 2 years
(2)____3 to 6 months (5)____2 to 3 years
(3)____6 months to 1 year (6)____3 years or more

27

13. What is your registration status?

(1)____full-time Academic Upgrading
(2)____part-time Academic Upgrading
(3)____several Academic Upgrading classes
(4)____other Lakeland Program taking 1 or more Academic Upgrading courses
(5)____other (specify)_____

28

14. Please check the Academic Upgrading courses at Lakeland College you have completed or in which you are currently enrolled.

(1)____ER/LS (SS 015)
(2)____Communications X (CO 015)
(3)____Communications XI (CO 025)
(4)____Communications XII (CO 035)
(5)____Mathematics X (MA 015)
(6)____Gen. Mathematics XI (MA 025)
(7)____Gen. Mathematics XII (MA 035)
(8)____Algebra XI (MA 020)
(9)____Algebra XII (MA 030)
(10)____Computer Literacy XII (CU 030)
(11)____Science X (SC 011)
(12)____Biology XI (BI 020)
(13)____Biology XII (BI 030)
(14)____Chemistry XI (SC 020)
(15)____Chemistry XII (SC 030)
(16)____Physics XI (SC 025)
(17)____Physics XII (SC 035)
(18)____Social Studies X (SS 011)
(19)____Social Studies XI (SS 023)
(20)____Social Studies XII (SS 031)

29-48

Part II. Goals. This section will focus on your educational, career, and personal goals. Please reply as directed.

A. Your goals:

1. What <u>are</u> your **educational goals** <u>at this time</u>? (check up to 3)

(1)____complete specific <u>courses</u>
(2)____complete this upgrading <u>program</u>
(3)____qualify for further training
(4)____attend a college/technical institute
(5)____attend university
(6)____personal satisfaction
(7)____qualify for a pay raise
(8)____improve employment opportunities
(9)____other(specify)_____

49-51

2. What were your **educational goals** when you first began Academic Upgrading? (check up to 3) 52-54

(1)___ complete specific courses
(2)___ complete this upgrading program
(3)___ qualify for further training
(4)___ attend a college/technical institute
(5)___ attend university
(6)___ personal satisfaction
(7)___ qualify for a pay raise
(8)___ improve employment
(9) opportunities
(10)___ other(specify)_____

3. Has your **educational goal** changed since you began your present program? 55

(1)___ yes (2)___ no

4. If you have had a change in your educational goal since you enrolled in Academic Upgrading, what caused the change? (check up to 3) 56-58

(1)___ no change
(2)___ improved self-esteem
(3)___ family/friends
(4)___ academic success
(5)___ academic problems
(6)___ College staff
(7)___ career information
(8)___ educational information
(9)___ workshop/discussion
(10)___ change in personal circumstances
(11)___ change in family situation
(12)___ other (specify)_____

5. What is your **career goal** at this time? 59

_____

6. Has your **career goal** changed since you began your present program? 60

(1)___ yes (2)___ no

7. If you have changed your **career goal** since you enrolled in Academic Upgrading, what caused the change? (check up to 3) 61-63

(1)___ no change
(2)___ improved self-esteem
(3)___ family/friends
(4)___ academic success
(5)___ academic problems
(6)___ College staff
(7)___ career information
(8)___ educational information
(9)___ workshop/discussion
(10)___ change in personal circumstances
(11)___ change in family situation
(12)___ other (specify)_____

8. Have you set some **personal goals** as a result of attending the Lakeland Academic Upgrading Program? (1)___ yes (2)___ no 64

9. Have your **personal goals** changed since you began the Program? 65

(1)___ yes (2)___ no

10. If you have had a change in personal goals, what caused the change? (check up to 3) 66-68

(1)___ no change
(2)___ improved self-esteem
(3)___ family/friends
(4)___ academic success
(5)___ academic problems
(6)___ College staff
(7)___ career information
(8)___ educational information
(9)___ workshop/discussion
(10)___ change in personal circumstances
(11)___ change in family situation
(12)___ other (specify)_____

B. Goal setting experience: (circle the number of your response):

	never	rarely	sometimes	often	regularly
11. Before you began the Academic Upgrading Program, how often did you set goals?	0	1	2	3	4
12. How often do you set goals now?	0	1	2	3	4
13. How often is goal setting an activity in your courses?	0	1	2	3	4
14. How often do you talk with your instructors at Lakeland about your goals?	0	1	2	3	4
15. How often have you taken a course or workshop on goal setting?	0	1	2	3	4
16. How often do you talk to other students/ friends about your goals?	0	1	2	3	4
17. How often do you talk to family members about your goals?	0	1	2	3	4
18. When you set goals, how often do you achieve them?	0	1	2	3	4

69-76

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

2

1 2 3 4 5

C. Satisfaction with Lakeland College resources and services
(use the scale below and circle the number of your response)

not applicable	dis-satisfied	somewhat satisfied	satisfied	very satisfied
0	1	2	3	4

19. How satisfied were you with resources and services in helping you **identify** your goal(s) **before you enrolled**?

	NA	D	SS	S	VS
a. department head	0	1	2	3	4
b. college counsellor(s)	0	1	2	3	4
c. instructor(s)	0	1	2	3	4
d. regional manager/chairman	0	1	2	3	4
e. campus secretary/registrar staff	0	1	2	3	4
f. other students	0	1	2	3	4
g. career/sponsoring agency counsellor	0	1	2	3	4
h. Lakeland College Calendar/Fact Sheet	0	1	2	3	4
i. other (specify)_____	0	1	2	3	4

06-14

20. How satisfied were you with these resources and services in helping you **plan** your goal(s) **during the Program**?

	NA	D	SS	S	VS
a. department head	0	1	2	3	4
b. college counsellor(s)	0	1	2	3	4
c. instructor(s)	0	1	2	3	4
d. regional manager/chairman	0	1	2	3	4
e. campus secretary/registrar staff	0	1	2	3	4
f. other students	0	1	2	3	4
g. career/sponsoring agency counsellor	0	1	2	3	4
h. Lakeland College courses	0	1	2	3	4
i. other (specify)_____	0	1	2	3	4

15-23

21. How satisfied are you with these resources and services in helping you to **work toward** your goals **while in the Program**?

a. department head	0	1	2	3	4
b. college counsellor(s)	0	1	2	3	4
c. instructor(s)	0	1	2	3	4
d. regional manager/chairman	0	1	2	3	4
e. campus secretaryregistrar staff	0	1	2	3	4
f. other students	0	1	2	3	4
g. career/sponsoring agency counsellor	0	1	2	3	4
h. Lakeland College courses	0	1	2	3	4
i. other (specify)_____	0	1	2	3	4

24-32

22. What could the College do to help you identify, plan, and achieve your educational, career, or personal goals?

_____

_____

_____

IF YOU HAVE EVER THOUGHT OF DROPPING OUT OF THE PROGRAM, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS 23 and 24, IF NOT, GO TO PART III.

23. If you have considered dropping out of the Program, indicate the reason(s). (check all that apply)

(1)____ dissatisfaction with organization of classes

(2)____ dissatisfaction with organization of the Program

(3)____ dissatisfaction with College administration

(4)____ dissatisfaction with course content

(5)____ dissatisfaction with instructors

(6)____ disappointed in my progress

33-38

(7)____financial difficulties due to sponsoring agencies
(8)____financial difficulties due to personal situation
(9)____family responsibilities/reasons
(10)____job offer
(11)____pressure of starting studies
(12)____lack of support from family and friends
(13)____personal problems
(14)____health concerns
(15)____placed on probation
(16)____other (specify)_____

39-48

24. Who or what helped you resolve the problem(s)? (circle all that apply)

(1)____there was no resoultion
(2)____College instructor
(3)____College counsellor
(4)____other student(s)
(5)____family/friends
(6)____sponsoring agency
(7)____outside counsellor
(8)____my own determination
(9)____importance of my goals
(10)____other (specify)_____

49-58

Part III. Program Information. This section will focus on information about the Academic Upgrading Program. Rate your agreement with the following statements. (use the scale below and circle the number of your response)

strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

A. Support Services	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. Library resources meet my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Library hours are adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Overall, College counselling services are helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
4. College counselling at my campus is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
5. College counselling for personal problems is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I would prefer a counsellor of my own sex.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Student orientation to Academic Upgrading is available.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Student orientation to Academic Upgrading is helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
9. A peer support program on my campus would be helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Access to computers is adequate for my courses.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Access is adequate to food services.	1	2	3	4	5

59-69

	SD	D	U	A	SA
12. Study or quiet space is appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Smoking arrangements are satisfactory.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Access to administration services (i.e., registration, inquiries) is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
15. College administration attempts to resolve problems I have with the Program.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Lakeland Academic Upgrading instructors are helpful in resolving problems I have with the Program.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Access to College financial aid staff is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5

70-75

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

3

1 2 3 4 5

IF YOU FINANCIALLY SPONSORED IN THE PROGRAM, ANSWER SECTION B, IF NOT, GO TO SECTION C.

B. Sponsoring Agencies	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. Sponsoring agencies are helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My funding was approved within a satisfactory time.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I get the kind of help I need from my sponsoring ageny.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My sponsoring agency contact/counsellors understand the Lakeland Academic Upgrading Program.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Career counselling by the sponsoring agency before I entered the Academic Upgrading Program was useful.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sponsoring agency staff are sensitive to my situation.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Time allowed to complete each course or program is adequate for my sponsorship.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The amount of approved financial assistance is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5

06-13

C. Instructional Information	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. The workload is appropriate for the length of courses.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Classroom activities are too structured for me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Classroom activities are not structured enough.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am able to work at my own pace.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Help is readily available for me in class.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The classroom physical environment (chairs, lighting, etc.) is appropriate for adult students.	1	2	3	4	5

14-19

	SD	D	U	A	SA
7. The atmosphere for learning is friendly.	1	2	3	4	5
8. This program helps me to learn how to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
9. This program encourages me to take responsibility for my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I like making decisions about my learning.	1	2	3	4	5

20-23

11. **How often are** the following kinds of instruction used in your Program?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
a. Large group discussion	1	2	3	4
b. Small group discussion	1	2	3	4
c. Tutorial (one to one)	1	2	3	4
d. Lecture format	1	2	3	4
e. Lab activities	1	2	3	4
f. Guest speaker	1	2	3	4
g. Student projects	1	2	3	4
h. Role plays	1	2	3	4
i. Independent study	1	2	3	4
j. Field trips	1	2	3	4
k. Films/videotapes/slides	1	2	3	4
l. Video cameras	1	2	3	4
m. Computers	1	2	3	4

24-36

12. In class, **how often would you like** the following kinds of instruction?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
a. Large group discussion	1	2	3	4
b. Small group discussion	1	2	3	4
c. Tutorial (one to one)	1	2	3	4
d. Lecture format	1	2	3	4
e. Lab activities	1	2	3	4
f. Guest speaker	1	2	3	4
g. Student projects	1	2	3	4
h. Role plays	1	2	3	4
i. Independent study	1	2	3	4
j. Field trips	1	2	3	4
k. Films/videotapes/slides	1	2	3	4
l. Video cameras	1	2	3	4
m. Computers	1	2	3	4

37-49

6. To what extent are you involved in planning the following: (circle the response)

		not at all	somewhat	a great deal
a.	overall course	1	2	3
b.	topic(s) for assignments	1	2	3
c.	specific learning experiences	1	2	3
d.	types of assignments	1	2	3
e.	evaluation of progress	1	2	3

50-54

D. Instructors	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. Overall, my instructors are effective.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My instructors in the Program are generally knowledgeable in course content.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My instructors are sensitive to my needs and interests.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Instructors are approachable.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would like more with academic problems from my instructors.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I would like more help with career/vocational planning from my instructors.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am satisfied with the help I get from my instructors when I have personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am satisfied with feedbackI get from my instructors about my academic progress.	1	2	3	4	5

55-62

E. Curriculum	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. Overall, the Program is appropriate for my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Courses develop abilities I will need in future work.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Specific course objectives support my own goals.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Courses meet my expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Course materials and resources are up to date.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The time allowed to complete each course is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am satisfied with the program grading procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Tests are based on what has been covered in the courses.	1	2	3	4	5

63-70

E. Other	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. Before I enrolled, information I received about the Academic Upgrading Program was complete.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I was placed at an appropriate level when I entered the program.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Information on transferability of courses is readily available.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am well informed about how transferable my courses are to other institutions and/or programs.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Generally, I will be adequately prepared for further education/training or work.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The Program is what I thought it would be like.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Overall, I am satisfied with the Program.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would recommend this Program to others.	1	2	3	4	5

71-78

Part IV. Comments.

1. Weaknesses in the Academic Upgrading Program

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Strengths in the Academic Upgrading Program

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Other comments about your Program

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY

Appendix B

Questionnaire Administration Guidelines

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES

LAKELAND COLLEGE ADULT UPGRADING PROGRAM

Date of administration: February 21, 1990 **Time of administration: 11:00 a.m.**

Dear Evaluation Administrator,

These guidelines accompany the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Current Student questionnaires and are a review of the information presented at the January 25 planning meeting at Vermilion.

A. YOU, THE ADMINISTRATOR

You have been designated by the College and the evaluation team as the official administrator of the current student questionnaires on your campus. You are, therefore, in charge of the process from the arrival of the questionnaires on your campus to the time you pack them up and return them to the evaluation team. For the survey process to go smoothly, it is important that you read these guidelines carefully before the administration of the questionnaires.

B. SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

This phase of the evaluation consists of a questionnaire for faculty and students currently involved in the Academic Upgrading Program. All Academic Upgrading students and instructors have been invited to participate in this survey. Both the instructor and student questionnaires will be done at the same time on all Lakeland College campuses.

C. INTRODUCING THE SURVEY PROCESS

After all the students and faculty who wish to do the questionnaire have been seated in a room where they will not be disturbed, please read the following points out loud to them before distributing the questionnaires:

1. This is an evaluation of the Lakeland College Academic Upgrading Program and your input as instructors and students will provide important information about what is working and what needs to be changed in the program. Today the survey questionnaires will be completed by all students and all instructors in the Academic Upgrading Program. There are several other components of the evaluation; one is a focus group interview for students.

2. A focus group or small group interview is scheduled for March 8 between 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. at the Vermilion campus for students who wish to share their experiences about the Program. Only twelve students will be selected to participate and if you are interested please sign up on the sheet at the desk as you leave the room. You will be telephoned in early March to finalize the arrangements. If you have a question about please feel free to call them at the number listed on the sign up sheet. Signing the volunteer sheet does not commit you to the interview, it simply indicates your interest.

3. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to stop answering the questionnaire any time you wish. If you decide to not answer the questionnaire at any point, return the questionnaire to me before you leave. It is important that all copies be returned to the evaluators.

4. It should take you between approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire but take all the time you need to give thoughtful answers. The questionnare is totally confidential so please do not put your name anywhere on the instrument.

5. Please write your answers directly on the questionnaire as directed. Read each question carefully because some ask you to select one choice, others to select up to three options, and others allow you to choose as many answers as you wish. Do not write in the far right hand column because that is for computer coding of responses.

6. I will give you a chance to ask questions before I hand out the instruments but once you begin writing, it is very important that you do not ask questions out loud as that may disturb others. If you have questions raise your hand and I will come over and speak with you personally. It is also very important that you do not discuss any points or questions with any other participants while doing the questionnaire. After you have finished, you are free to leave; please be as quiet as possible to avoid disturbing anyone.

7. If you change you mind on any question, erase carefully or cross out clearly. There are no extra instruments for you to have a new copy.

8. Thank you in advance for your participation; your input is very important to the Program evaluation.

9. Do you have any questions before we begin?

D. SUPERVISING THE SURVEY PROCESS

As the participants fill out the questionnaires be alert for raised hands. Deal with each question quietly, minimizing the chance that others will hear your exchange. When someone asks you a question, help as much as you can but avoid leading the individual to a certain response. Sometimes reading the following questions may clarify the unclear question. Remind participants, if necessary, that they are not to ask anyone else but you for any information and that they are not to talk or otherwise disturb the writing process.

E. CONCLUDING THE SURVEY PROCESS

As student respondents return their questionnaires remind them about the focus group by gesturing or quietly indicating the sign up sheet. After all the questionnaires are returned, count them to ensure you have all the copies. Without discussing the questionnaires or showing them to anyone, please package all of them up and return them to the evaluation team using the return label provided.

Thank you again for your valuable assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Lucy Rachynski, Project Manager
492-7949

Appendix C

Cover Memorandum to Questionnaire Adminstrators

DATE: February 15, 1990

TO: Evaluation Questionnaire Administrator
Lakeland College

FROM: Paula Brook Telephone: 492-7949
Research Director

RE: Evaluation Questionnaire

Attached are the Student and Instructor Questionnaires for the Academic Upgrading Evaluation. Please administer these questionnaires according to Guidelines attached.

It is important that all questionnaires be distributed and collected during the same class time. **DO NOT LET STUDENTS OR INSTRUCTORS TAKE QUESTIONNAIRES AWAY TO COMPLETE AND/OR TO RETURN LATER.** Even if an instructor or student chooses <u>not</u> to complete a questionnaire, please collect that copy.

Return all questionnaires in the envelope provided. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call. Thank you for your assistance with this important task.

Paula Brook and Lucy Rachynski
492 - 7949

PAB/gk
attachments/